

The Space Between

**Discursive constructions of masculinity in contemporary
South African men's lifestyle magazines**

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Abstract

This thesis considers the constructions of discourses of masculinities by contemporary South African men's lifestyle magazines, and examines the extent to which they are simply mainstream promulgators of 'old school' patriarchy and soft porn, or the ways in which they offer new and complex models of modern masculinity. The thesis further examines whether local men's lifestyle magazines perhaps represent a unique synthesis within masculine discourses? This study explores how a new understanding of the discourses of masculinity can help to explain the commonly held assumption that masculinity is in 'crisis'.

The post-structuralist study explores the discourses through textual analysis, employing a social semiotic and Critical Discourse Analysis multimodal approach which links the social with the representational. The study concentrates its analysis on the most prevalent discourses in the text. The research takes the form of the textual analysis of four articles taken from prominent South African men's lifestyle magazines.

In response to suggestions that no generalised 'crisis' in masculinity exists because patriarchy is still very much intact, this thesis suggests that appreciating identity as self-reflexive provides a different understanding of the anxiety surrounding contemporary masculinity. Gender as a self-reflexive project allows the self to be constructed from a multitude of resources resulting in the apprehension of choice. This study attempts to show how the discursive space created in the discourses of masculinity in men's magazines provides the reader with an intimate, yet emotionally elusive place where the reader can navigate these ambiguities of contemporary masculinity.

The findings of this study indicate that the discourses offered by the magazines are more complex than a synthesis of masculine discourses. The prevalent use of binaries in each magazine is examined and the significance of these binaries with regards to the so called

'crisis' in masculinity is explored. The use of binary opposition to construct self through other is identified as the system through which discursive space is constructed. While the magazines are stringently adhering to and reinforcing hegemonic masculinities, the utilisation of binaries both establishes the norm whilst at the same time provides the space to deal with anxiety arising out of the emergence of new masculine discourses. The significance of this study lies in its re-theorisation of the masculinity 'crisis' in terms of anxiety surrounding emergent masculinities and the possibilities these finding offer for future research.

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	I
ABSTRACT.....	II
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	IV
LIST OF FIGURES.....	VIII
LIST OF TABLES	IX
CHAPTER 1	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Rationale	2
1.1.1 The demise of local pornography	3
1.1.2 The Emergence of men's lifestyle magazines in South Africa	5
1.2 Aims of research and research questions	8
1.3 Overview of the thesis	9
CHAPTER 2	12
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	12
2.1 Introduction.....	12
2.2 Masculinity in 'crisis'.....	12
2.3 Identity, Gender and Discourse.....	16
2.4 Constructions of discourses of masculinity in men's lifestyle magazines	20
CHAPTER 3	25
METHODOLOGY	25
3.1 Introduction.....	25
3.2 Framework of Analysis.....	26

3.3 Data	32
3.4 Description of Data.....	32
3.4.1 <i>FHM</i>	33
3.4.2 Men's Health	34
3.4.3 <i>GQ</i>	35
3.4.4 <i>Blink Magazine</i>	35
 CHAPTER 4	 36
 GQ MAGAZINE.....	 36
Excessive irony in the construction of masculinity	36
4.1 Introduction	36
4.2 Metrosexual, Übersexual , Retrosexual	37
4.3 Description of the article and Intertextual Context.....	39
4.4 Construction of the Author – Reader Relationship.....	41
4.5 Statement and Negation.....	42
4.6 Metrosexual vs. übersexual: Binaries and the realisation of excessive irony	43
4.7 Classification hierarchies and Visual Irony	44
4.8 Composition and Irony	47
4.9 Modality and the construction of irony	50
4.10 Final Comments.....	53
 CHAPTER 5	 56
 FHM.....	 56
Death of the Berserker	56
5.1 Introduction	56
5.2 Description of the article.....	56
5.3 War-like Discourse.....	58
5.3.1 The fear of death.....	62
5.3.2 Construction of war-like discourse through Visual and Verbal binaries	64
5.4 Construction of the relationship between the audience and the author	66
5.5 Heroically cruel: Intertextual references and categorisation	68

5.6 Summary	70
CHAPTER 6	71
MEN'S HEALTH MAGAZINE	71
Muscle metaphors and ideological struggles in 'crisis' discourses.....	71
6.1 Introduction	71
6.2 Description of the article.....	72
6.3 The construction of body as machine	74
6.3.1 Bodily mechanics, the other and construction of the Subject - Author – Reader Relationship	76
6.4 Communism vs. Capitalism: binaries and the realisation of subject as other	80
6.5 Pride and Sympathy: secondary binaries of economic discourses	84
6.6 Final Comments: Communist mechanics or Capitalist machines?.....	87
CHAPTER 7	90
<i>BLINK</i> MAGAZINE	90
The Black Chameleon	90
7.1 Introduction	90
7.2 Description of the Article.....	91
7.3 Black as normative	92
7.4 Binaries: Traditional vs. Modern and their dialectical synthesis.....	96
7.5 Metrosexual, Übersexual and Retrosexual: hierarchical categorisation	100
7.6 Modality and the Construction of the Author – Reader Relationship.....	102
7.7 Summary	105
CHAPTER 8	106
RE-THEORISING THE SO-CALLED 'CRISIS'	106
8.1 Introduction	106
8.1.2 The 'crisis'	106
8.1.3 Review of analysis.....	108
8.1.4 South African men's lifestyle magazines	109
8.2 Men's lifestyle magazines as a site of struggle	110

8.3 Binaries as a hegemonic	111
8.4 Discursive constructions of self through other.....	114
8.4.1 Binary space	114
8.4.2 Establishment of order of discourse through self/other binary	116
8.5 Dominant Discourses and Identity.....	118
8.6 Implications and suggestions for further research.....	119
BIBLIOGRAPHY	122
Books and Articles.....	122
Websites	133
APPENDIX 1	137
APPENDIX 2	141
APPENDIX 3	145
APPENDIX 4	152

List of Figures

Figure 1	<i>Scope</i> Magazine	3
Figure 2	<i>Men's Health</i> Magazine	5
Figure 3	<i>FHM</i> Magazine	5
Figure 4	<i>GQ</i> Magazine	6
Figure 5	First edition of <i>Blink</i> Magazine	7
Figure 6	Framework of Analysis	31
Figure 7	Page 58 with large image of Ali	39
Figure 8	Page 59 with 'tough guy' triangle	40
Figure 9	The Quiz	40
Figure 10	Ali as he knocks out an opponent	45
Figure 11	The visual classification hierarchy	45
Figure 12	The first two pages of the article	56
Figure 13	Page 70 and 71 with the coke timeline	56
Figure 14	Page 72 with the military photograph	57
Figure 15	Pages 142 and 143	72
Figure 16	Pages 144 and 145	73
Figure 17	Pages 146 and 147	73
Figure 18	Gym owner Angel in his gym	77
Figure 19	Close up of bodybuilders side-turned head	78
Figure 20	Example of a black and white image from the text	79
Figure 21	Main image on page 142	83
Figure 22	A Cuban bodybuilder flexing his muscles	86
Figure 23	Page 14, with the title and subtitle	91
Figure 24	Page 15	91
Figure 25	Page 16	92
Figure 26	The main image on page 14	98
Figure 27	Johnnie Walker advertisement	99
Figure 28	The arrow indicates the fourth place setting	104

List of Tables

Table 1	Table showing circulation figures of pornography magazines in South Africa in 1994 and 1995	4
Table 2	Circulation figures for FHM, Men's Health and GQ, 2003 - 2005	6

Chapter 1

Introduction

Sometimes I'm not happy being a bloke in the late twentieth century. Sometimes I'd rather be my Dad, he never had to worry about delivering the goods, because he never knew there were any goods to deliver.

(Nick Hornby, *High Fidelity* 1995: 102)

The idea that masculinity is encumbered by some sort of 'crisis' has become so popular that when I raised the with my third year film and media students, they all assumed the 'crisis' was an unassailable fact. Many students cited men's lifestyle magazines such as *FHM* and *Men's Health* as evidence. While the logic behind connecting men's lifestyle magazines as evidencing 'crisis' mode in masculinity may be a implausible, the magazines are certainly a noteworthy resource in research concerning masculine discourses in the media. Contemporary South African men's lifestyle magazines dominate the men's magazine title market and are of particular significance in terms of their discursive constructions of emerging masculine discourses. Unlike many media commentators, I have sought to avoid taking a moralistic stance towards these magazines, not wishing to simply condemn them as sexist and irresponsible. Neither do I simply celebrate the new forms of masculinities offered up by these new titles. Instead, I set out to explore the spaces that *FHM*, *Men's Health*, *GQ* and *Blink Magazine* occupy and the ways in which they discursively construct masculinities. Through the analysis of these men's lifestyle magazines I aim to examine and re-theorise the 'crisis' in masculinity.

1.1 Rationale

Why explore the relationship between media, gender and identity? Media is a central element in our modern lives, whilst gender and sexuality are essential to how we think about our identities as humans. With the media containing so many representations of men and women, it is unlikely that these representations would have no impact on our sense of self. The media does not have a direct and straightforward effect on its audience. It would be absurd to simply assume that people absorb all media they consume into their identities. As media scholars, it is perhaps simpler to approach the media as an intravenous injection of values, ideas and attitudes into a passive audience resulting in a particular behaviour than to negotiate the intricate relationship between media and society (Fourie, 2001: 294). The media cannot be the only influence on a person's perceptions and world views but it certainly is a significant one. To begin to understand how media might influence our identities, we need to examine what they are presenting to the audience and how this affects the way we see the world around us.

Men's lifestyle magazines are relatively new to the South African media market. It is not that men did not read or buy magazines in the past, quite the contrary was true - men were the primary purchasers of hobby or interest magazines. However, during the 1990's, a new generation of men's lifestyle magazines was launched in South Africa which redefined the South African magazine landscape. The sales of *FHM* and *Men's Health* rapidly matched that of well-established women's magazines and soon outstripped the sales of those magazines traditionally aimed at local men, such as *Scope Magazine*. These lifestyle magazines offered a multitude of masculine discourses to their readers as opposed to the more homogenous offerings of traditionally patriarchal publications. This thesis sets out to explain what the success of local men's lifestyle magazines tells us about the changing nature of contemporary masculine discourses. We need to briefly examine the development of local men's lifestyle magazines and the significance of their success.

1.1.1 The demise of local pornography



Figure 1. *Scope Magazine*

Ten years ago, lifestyle magazines for men were virtually unheard of in South Africa. The most popular magazine for men at the time was *Scope Magazine* (See figure 1). Launched in 1965, *Scope Magazine* was a local 'soft-porn' magazine, based on the American model, *Playboy*. Hugh Hefner launched *Playboy* in 1953 for the upwardly mobile men of America. Similar to mainstream pornography, *Playboy* objectified women for the purposes of male

pleasure, but unlike its various predecessors it also included, what Dines (1995:255) terms, 'service features'

on sexy consumables, current events, advice columns, reviews, interviews and short stories. *Scope Magazine* worked within a distinctly patriarchal, homogenised discourse of masculinity, which maintained men's power over women through the objectification of the female body. Due to strict regulatory media censorship laws, *Scope* had to insert stars over the women's breasts and other 'unacceptable' body parts, but this did not stop it from being a success in the South African market, with readership numbers well over 200 000.

Soft-porn magazines aside, before the mid-1990s the term "men's magazine" referred exclusively to local special interest titles such as car magazines and fishing magazines. Then, in 1994, a water sport magazine, *Big Blue* decided to broaden its editorial focus to include service features about sex and fashion alongside photographic spreads of women in bikinis (Spira, 2003: 1). *Big Blue*'s publisher, Freewind, changed its title to *Directions*, heralding the birth of South Africa's first men's lifestyle magazine. Building itself off a relatively small, water sports orientated readership base, *Directions* grew its circulation and advertising revenue quickly. This magazine began to shift the focus of masculine publishing away from soft-pornography and towards a more generalised focus on 'lifestyle'.

Scope, as well as local versions of *Hustler* and *Penthouse*, saw rapidly diminishing sales during this time (see table 1 below). *Scope* Magazine chose to re-launch itself in November 1995 as a men's lifestyle magazine without the 'girlie shots' that had sustained it for three decades. After *Scope's* conversion to lifestyle content, the magazines circulation dropped even more rapidly, leading to its closure in June 1996 (Staff Reporter, 1996: 1). *Scope's* last editor, David Mullany, said later in 1998, in an interview, that, "The vociferous fire-and-brimstone fundamentalists have made it impossible for *Scope* to sell itself" (*Independent Online*, 1998). However, according to some media planners at the time, *Scope* was a victim of its own boldness when it recast itself as a general-interest magazine. They claim this lost *Scope* its target audience. Editorial director of Republican Press, the publishers of *Scope Magazine*, Roy Minnaar said the decision was due to market pressures. The general trend towards lifestyle media pushed out the traditionally patriarchal publications in favour of more modern titles offering wider discursive choices and by 1998, the local versions of *Playboy* and *Penthouse* joined in *Scope's* demise.

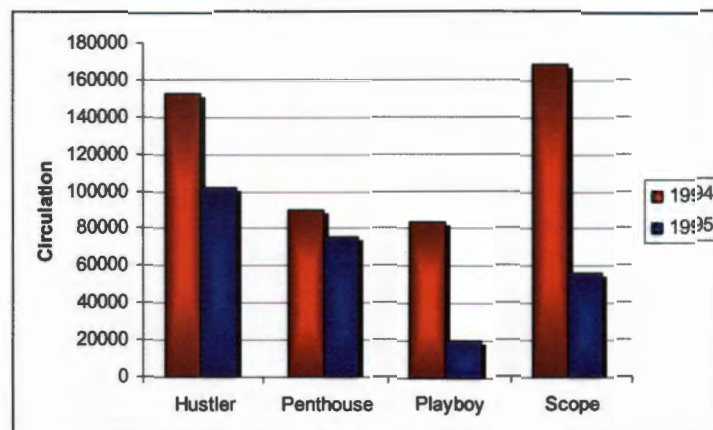


Table 1. Table showing circulation figures of pornography magazines in South Africa in 1994 and 1995.

1.1.2 The Emergence of men's lifestyle magazines in South Africa

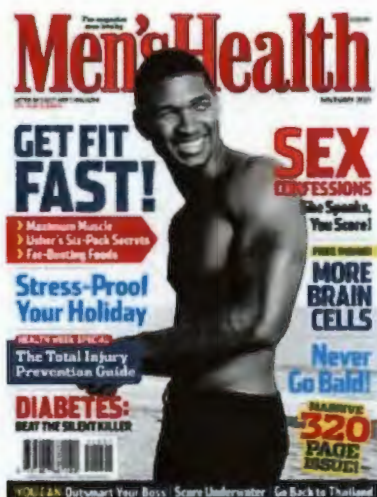


Figure 2. *Men's Health* Magazine

With the downfall of local soft-porn magazines, the South African men's lifestyle category came into its own when the local version of US-based *Men's Health* was launched by Touchline Media in 1997 (Spira, 2003: 1). *Men's Health* (see figure 2, opposite) offered to a slightly older male than *Directions*, "tons of useful stuff" around five editorial pillars: health, fitness, stress, sex and nutrition (Spira, 2003: 1). The formula was a success and by 2003,

Men's Health was South Africa's biggest selling men's lifestyle title, with an average circulation of over 80 000.

Men's Health was aimed at a different audience to that of *Directions*, one with different interests, which shows a more nuanced understanding of the masculine magazine market. The introduction of a second successful lifestyle publication aimed at men illustrates the trend towards a multiplication of masculine discourses available in South African media.



Figure 3. *FHM* Magazine

A third publication entered the market at the end of 2000. A joint venture between Naspers, Uppercase Media and *FHM*'s UK publisher Emap, brought *FHM* to South Africa (Figure 3, opposite). *FHM*'s readers are about five years younger than the average *Men's Health* reader is and has different interests to that of the *Directions* reader. In 2000, just after the launch of *FHM* South Africa, *MAXIM* Magazine, an international men's lifestyle magazine bestseller, launched a local version (Fine, 2000: 1).

Following the launch of *Maxim*, Condé Nast launched the local version *GQ* (see figure 4 below). Each magazine tried to carve itself a niche within the local men's lifestyle market, a process which catalysed the proliferation of multiple

masculine discourses into South African media. Previously men were addressed according to their soft-porn preferences or hobbies. Now male magazine consumers were hailed according to specific masculine identities.



Figure 4. *GQ* Magazine

The sudden influx of men's magazines into South Africa had its drawbacks. *Directions* fell away in April 2000, followed by the local version of *Maxim*, which collapsed at the end of the year after months of turbulent relationships with various publishers (Spira, 2003: 1). In January to June 2002, with a circulation of 37 000, *GQ* sold less than half as many copies as *FHM* (see table 2 below). *GQ*'s slow growth rate and small circulation figures led to a drop-off in ad-spend. In response, *GQ*'s publishers decided to reduce publication from monthly to

seven issues per year and eventually dropped off the market in 2005.

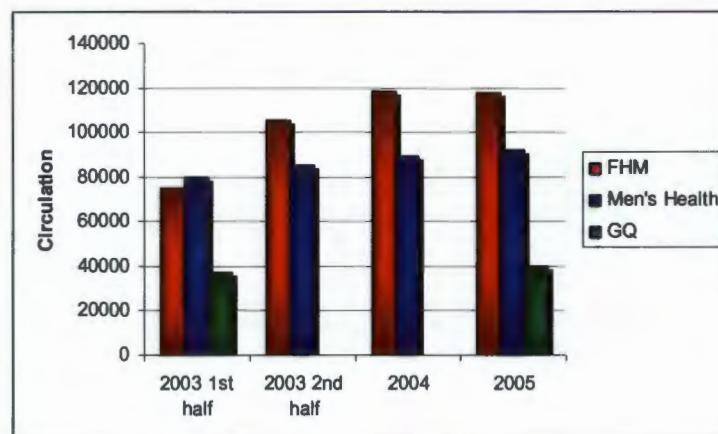


Table 2. Circulation figures for *FHM*, *Men's Health* and *GQ*, 2003 - 2005.

By the end of 2003, *Men's Health* and *FHM* were the most successful men's lifestyle magazines on the South African market (see figure 6 above). With this in mind, in 2003, following the success of *Men's Health* and *FHM*, former *Men's Health* editor, Paul Kerton, decided to launch *Razor*, a men's magazine aimed at men over 30. He believed that the dominant men's magazine titles were all aimed at men under 30, which left a gap in the market for an older generation of men's lifestyle titles (Stafford, 2003). Kerton, in an interview with Linda Stafford, journalist for the *Financial Mail* said that,

FHM, Men's Health and GQ are chasing remarkably similar markets. With Razor, we're going for the man who is no longer chasing babes and wishing he had a great career and a BMW. He [i]s in a stable relationship and he has a good job - perhaps even his own business - and the car to go with it (Stafford, 2003: 1).

The magazine excited media analysts but failed to materialise, further strengthening the market dominance of *FHM* and *Men's Health*.



Figure 5. First edition of Blink Magazine

In October 2004, a new, local men's lifestyle magazine title, *Blink*, was launched (See figure 5, opposite). *Blink* magazine is a Black Empowerment Initiative aimed at affluent black males between the ages of 25 and 35 (*Blink Lifestyle Online*, 2005: 1). The publication house, *Blink Lifestyle Media*, aimed the magazine at a rapidly emerging market. As the magazine's editor Siphwe Mpye stated in an interview,

...black men are not represented correctly in local men's mags. Content wise there [i]s nothing that says ME in any of them and visually, black models/personalities are just used to add a splash of colour ... No matter what anyone says, most men's issues in South Africa are not universal, they are race specific ... White men, for example, don't have as bad a rep as black men when it comes to abuse and desertion issues. We want to tackle these problems head on and paint a new face for the black man. It is not artificial [an] face either, because good black men are in abundance (O' Toole, 2005: 1).

Blink offers discursive representations of masculinity previously not available in the South African men's lifestyle magazines. While the circulation of this magazine is small,

and limited by an undersized distribution network, this magazine has gained popularity with the emergent black middleclass in South Africa, and its readership is stable.

What is interesting about *Men's Health*, *FHM* and *Blinks*' survival is that their content and audiences do not overlap in the same way that *GQ*, *Maxim* and *Directions* did. This seems to suggest that while an explosion of slightly different versions of masculinities available in men's lifestyle media occurred, in terms of the audience, there was not a market for such a heterogeneous discursive offering. In early 2006, *GQ* re-launched itself as a monthly magazine, this time with a more laddish tone similar to the one taken by *FHM*. *GQ* is no longer trying to be unique, but rather trying to gain entry into *FHM*'s pool of readership. The magazine has manoeuvred itself well, and is being sold on the shelves of South Africa's supermarkets, Checkers, Shoprite and Pick 'n Pay, which since 2000, *FHM* has not been able to do. *GQ*'s readership is picking up and the magazine seems to be successfully competing with *FHM*. What the recent success of *GQ* suggests is that the laddish discourse of masculinity offered by *FHM* and now *GQ* connects with the younger South African male market. The collapse of the various proposed or failed men's lifestyle magazines indicates that South African men are aware of the masculine discourses that they want to consume and those they do not. This self-awareness highlights the significance of *FHM*, *GQ*, *Men's Health* and *Blink Magazine* as significant resources for research into the discursive constructions of masculinity in the media. These are the magazines South African men read and draw on as identity forming discursive resources.

1.2 Aims of research and research questions

The aim of this research is to contribute towards developing a nuanced understanding of the relationship between contemporary South African men's lifestyle magazines and their readers in a way that is sensitive to the magazines subjectivities. My aim is to devise a new understanding of the discourses of masculinity available to men in local lifestyle magazines which explains the commonly held assumption that masculinity is currently afflicted by some form of 'crisis'. I investigate the different discursive mechanisms used in the texts and how this enables dialogue surrounding the so called 'crisis'.

The following questions enable me to identify and explore the discourses of masculinity in South African men's lifestyle magazines:

- What are the constructions of discourses of masculinities by contemporary South African men's lifestyle magazines?
- To what extent are local men's lifestyle magazines simply mainstream promulgators of 'old school' patriarchy and soft porn?
- Are men's lifestyle magazines offering up new and complex models of modern masculinity?
- Or, are local men's lifestyle magazines perhaps representing a unique synthesis within masculine discourses?

In addressing these research questions, I hope to make visible the multiple discursive constructions of masculinity available in men's lifestyle magazines. I wish to analyse the ways in which men's magazines negotiate the complex uncertainties surrounding masculine identities in contemporary society.

1.3 Overview of the thesis

Chapter two presents the theoretical framework and review of literature. The chapter begins with an overview of the state of the art of reading magazines. Following this, the chapter outlines the key debates in literature on the 'crisis' in masculinity; the relationships between gender, identity and the media; and the particular masculinities constructed in men's lifestyle magazines. I look particularly at the relation between media and gender identity, and argue that the 'crisis' in masculinity emerged from the multiplicity of masculine identities available to men in society.

Chapter three contains a description of the methodology used in this thesis. This thesis uses a methodological framework derived from social semiotics and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which both arise from structuralist linguistic analysis. Social Semiotics involves the description of semiotic resources (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001: 135). Critical Discourse Analysis explores the power relationships innate in language (Fairclough, 1995: 55). The chapter also describes some of the key analytical concepts used in this thesis, such as modality and irony.

Chapter four analyses the *GQ* article, “Tough Guys” (2006) using the critical discourse/social semiotics analysis model to understand the use of irony in the discourses of contemporary South African men’s lifestyle magazines. Irony is realised in the *GQ* article through a process of ‘statement and negation’, the construction of binaries and the construction of classification hierarchies. This chapter argues that irony is used in men’s lifestyle magazines to create distance between the readers and emotional issues construct a comfortable environment for the readers to explore the issues.

Chapter five continues the previous chapters critical aim by applying the research methodology to the *FHM* article, “Pablo and the Charlie Factory” (2006). Chapter six addresses how *FHM* presents excessive risk taking behaviour. A War-like discourse is prevalent throughout the article and it is formed through a narratively composed military intelligence dossier which uses categorisation, binary construction and the assembly of audience-author relations. The chapter examines how *FHM* focuses on extreme risk taking in order to avoid the end of meaning through death.

Chapters six and seven also identify and analyse the discourses used in two more men’s lifestyle magazines. Chapter six analyses the discourses used in the *Men’s Health* article, “Cuban Muscle Crisis” (2006). There are three dominant discourses evident in this article, “Cuban Muscle Crisis”, one being ‘body as machine’ and the others, ‘Capitalism’ and ‘Communism’. Chapter six furthers our understanding of the use of the metaphor in the discourses of contemporary South African men’s lifestyle magazines by analysing the metaphor of ‘body as machine’. Chapter seven confronts the discourses of masculinity

evident in the *Blink Magazine* article “Modern Male Identity” (2006). The *Blink* article is examined as a discursive struggle for the normative existence of a contemporary black South African identity.

The final chapter, chapter eight, draws together the analysis of previous chapters and discusses the implications of the findings. The prevalent use of binaries in each magazine is examined. The significance of these binaries with regards to the so called ‘crisis’ in masculinity is explored. In addressing this question, this chapter argues that local men’s lifestyle magazines are reinforcing hegemonic masculinities. It argues that the utilisation of binaries in this process both establishes the norm and provides the space to deal with the anxiety arising out of the emergence of new masculine discourses. The chapter concludes by examining the significance of this study in terms of its re-theorisation of the masculinity ‘crisis’ and anxiety surrounding emergent masculinities.

Chapter 2

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

Lifestyle magazines for men are a new phenomenon in South Africa. As significant sites of constructions of masculine discourses, they are particularly interesting. Considering the broad diversity of academic approaches to men's lifestyle magazines, it is prudent to firstly outline the current research on the topic and then structure a literature review in terms of the overarching debates within this topic. These debates include the argument that modern masculinity is in crisis; the relationships between gender, identity and the media; and the particular masculinities constructed in men's lifestyle magazines.

It makes sense, therefore, for the following discussion to address each of these aspects in turn.

2.2 Masculinity in Crisis

There is a lot of talk about the 'masculinity crisis' both in academia and popular culture. The notion that masculinity is in crisis emerged in popular culture with the release of Bly's (1990) *Iron John*, which encouraged men to react against the rise of feminism and awaken the dormant male leader. The debate flared up again in Britain with the publication of *On Men: Masculinity in Crisis* by Anthony Clare (2000). The book received a lot of media attention due to Clare's position as a popular broadcaster. Clare sets out the notion of 'Masculinity in crisis' as follows:

Now, the whole issue of men – the point of them, their purpose, their value, their justification – is a matter for public debate. Serious commentators declare that men are redundant, that women do not need them and children would be better off without them. At the beginning of the twenty first century it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that men are in serious trouble. Throughout the world, developed and developing, antisocial behaviour is essentially male. [...] And yet, for all their behaving badly, they do not seem any happier. Throughout North America, Europe and Australia, male suicides outnumber female by a factor of between 3 and 4 to 1. [...] Men renowned for their ability to be stoned, drunk or sexually daring, appear terrified by the prospect of revealing that they can be – and often are – depressed, dependent, in need of help. (2001: 3).

Claire (2001) argues that the post-feminist era has heralded a new gender order when men are in 'crisis' mode.

Similar discussions brewed in the United States with the publication of Faludi's *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the Modern Man* (1999), which followed her feminist best seller *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against Women* (1991). Faludi's (1999) work looks at changing gender relations and men's cultural responses. Faludi (1999: 40) argues that post-war American society has 'stiffed' men concerning their role in society, replacing patriarchy with consumerism. Claire (2000) and Faludi (1999) both argue that the 'crisis' stems from a breakdown in traditionally held masculine roles in society. It is suggested that traditional roles which encourage men to focus on their careers leave men without fulfilling human engagement with their partners and family and friends. Men who cannot provide, or who find themselves being provided for by women, are damaged because they cannot fulfil their 'role' in society. Both authors agree that in the post feminist world that we now found ourselves in, it is no longer the women who need saving from the men, but the men from themselves.

Buchbinder (1994: 9-23) maintains that there were a number of factors that led to the breakdown of the myth of the traditional home and thus traditional notions of patriarchal masculinity. Firstly, the mental, physical and emotional effects of wars as well as the institutional separation of pain and emotion have lead to men being emotionally unavailable (Buchbinder, 1994: 9). Buchbinder (1994: 11) argues that the post war economic reality of the Great Depression left men in an emotionally trying quagmire: if a

man could not find work he was not a real man, but there was no work to be found. A further trigger of the 'crisis' was the sexual revolution, which Buchbinder argues, was catalysed by *Playboy Magazine's* call to men to throw off the shackles of traditional relationships. *Playboy* encouraged men to actualise their hedonistic fantasies by rejecting the traditional dogma of emotional and economic commitment. This myth of the eternal bachelor was furthered by the hippy movement which encouraged sexual freedom outside traditional realms of heterosexual commitment. Buchbinder's (1994: 13) model argues that the outbreak and spread of HIV/AIDS ended the era of free love (Buchbinder, 1994: 13). Condoms and abstinence, argues Buchbinder (1994), limit male sexuality by containing their virility and covering their manhood. Male sexuality is no longer free and natural – it has to be controlled to avoid sickness and death.

A further two movements Buchbinder (1994) regards as heavily influential were the feminist movement and gay liberation. Feminism threatened men's own sense of self as sexual and powerful, forcing men to review their own positions and assumptions. Feminism has changed women's expectations of men, but has perhaps not provided sufficient tools to men to fulfil these new roles. The gay liberation movement overrode the myth of a single masculinity, allowing the emergence of multiple masculinities (Buchbinder, 1994: 19). Buchbinder (1994) contends that both of these movements, although peripheral to heterosexual male identity, could have left male identities disjointed and in 'crisis'. Buchbinder's argument suggests a generalised breakdown of patriarchy is responsible for the 'crisis' in masculinity. Studies suggest however, that patriarchy is very much intact, which in supports my argument that the 'crisis' lies elsewhere.

In opposition to Faludi, Blye, Clare and Buchbinder, Connell (1995) argues that, despite the impact of feminism, the gay liberation movement and other inhibiting social factors, patriarchy is still very much intact as hegemonic masculinity. Gramsci (1971: 164) defines hegemony as follows,

...hegemony works through ideology, but does not consist of false ideas, perceptions, and definitions. It works primarily by inserting the subordinate class into key institutions and structures which support the power and social authority

of the dominant order. It is, above all, in these structures and relations that a subordinate class lives its subordination.

Hegemonic masculinity is not a static phenomenon and it is a key site of struggle within society and it is reliant on the subordination of other sexual orientations and masculinities. Nevertheless, according to Connell (1995) hegemonic masculinity is held in place by productive power relations and works to maintain men's continued dominance within the family, economy and civil society.

Despite a multitude of anti-patriarchal social forces, Connell (1995) maintains that there is no generalised systematic disintegration of patriarchal power structures. This is not to say that there is no so called 'crisis' of masculinity. It merely suggests that we are looking in the wrong place. Segal (1990) and other sociologists have found that changes in gender relations occur at a very slow pace. It may be that there is a series of more minor crises, for smaller groups of particular men in specific contexts, for example, educational underachievement of men (compared to women) (see Francis, 1999). Alternatively, it may be that there are negative consequences of more long-term social trends, such as the effect of the decline of manual labour on the masculinity of working class men (see McDowell, 1991). The evidence suggests that there is a 'crisis' in masculinity. If the 'crisis' is not part of a generalised decline in patriarchy then it is time to reconsider this so called 'crisis' theoretically.

Men's magazines, more specifically, 'lad' magazines such as *FHM* and *GQ* are seen to reflect the symptoms of masculine 'crisis'. Their widely observed adolescent tendencies are seen as a nostalgic retreat into teenage behaviour, including immature humour, an absence of social responsibility, excessive risk and a rebellious nature are argued to be symptomatic of some form of 'crisis' in masculinity (Benwell, 2003). This argument has been supported by Whelehan (2000), Nixon (1996: 382) and by Rutherford, who argues that 'male redundancy has created cultures of prolonged adolescence' (1997: 7). The presence of these nostalgic magazines would seem to contradict Connell, evidencing the existence of some sort of 'crisis'. However, with the arrival of men's lifestyle magazines in South African, there has been an explosion of masculine identities available in local popular culture.

Giddens (1991) understanding of identity as a self-reflexive project provides a different understanding of the possible source of anxiety concerning contemporary masculine identity. Giddens (1991) argues that we are living in a 'post traditional' society that has provided the individual with more varied and flexible identities to choose from. Giddens (1991) argues that there has been a slow decline of 'traditional' society, which previously limited our lives. As society has moved away from its earlier traditions, life has become less predictable and fixed. In negotiating 'post-traditional' society, everyone has to choose their own way of living (Giddens, 1991). As Giddens (1991: 70) submits:

What to do? How to act? Who to be? These are focal questions for everyone living in circumstances of late modernity – and ones which, on some level or another, all of us answer, either discursively or through day-to-day social behaviour.

Giddens (1991: 53) argues that the post-traditional, late-modern self is a reflexive project whereby we constantly fashion, sustain and modify a set of biographical narratives. He explains that self-identity is intrinsically linked to the biography that a person 'supplies' about themselves. Thus the self is constructed from available resources rather than inherited from one's primary caregivers. The Media suggest ways of living which present ways of negotiating the late modern world. The narrative that we construct about our identities is influenced by the perspectives we pick up in the media as well as our own social experiences (Giddens, 1991: 50-70). Giddens' theory of self-reflexive identity construction supports my argument that the 'crisis' is not resultant of the untimely death of patriarchy but more an anxious consequence of free choice. Gender as a self-reflexive project then allows the self to be constructed from a multitude of available resources. The quandary of choice necessarily involves anxiety and some sort of 'crisis'.

2.3 Identity, Gender and Discourse

As a term, 'Masculinities', has evoked a complicated debate which continues today. Theorists tending towards more essentialist views tend to select a feature which defines the core of masculinity, whereas those leaning towards constructivism believe gender identity to be an assembly of social experiences. Essentialist understandings of gender

identity can be somewhat simplistic, but it is easy to fall into the trap of essentialism. For example, Buchbinder (1994: 2-3) argues that gendered behaviour is learned, it is what humans do, based on primary biological difference, to be acknowledged as men or women. He argues that,

Behaviour characterised as masculine or feminine, in the first place, is *learned*; and, in the second, it is what we *do* in order to be acknowledged as men/masculine and women/feminine [...] Masculinity and femininity are thus not *inherent* characteristics [...] the relation of sex to gender is thus *binary* or systemic in that each term depends on the existence of the other.

Although it sounds like Buchbinder is trying to view gender as learned behaviour, he is simplifying gender as a biological; confusing sex (biological) with gender (social). Although he argues that gender is learned, these lessons are based on a pre-supposition of sexual difference – if we use sex to be recognised as a female or male, then we are assuming this binary difference pre-exists. Buchbinder's (1994) complex analysis shows how easy it is to slip into essentialist thinking, while trying to work within a constructivist paradigm.

Essentialist understanding of gender does not sufficiently recognise the role played by external resources, such as the media, on gender identity formation. The position of this research is that gender is better understood within a more constructivist paradigm which views identity as a malleable cultural construction and approaches to masculinity and gender more broadly have begun favouring the more general focus on discourses taken in cultural studies (Benwell, 2003: 8).

Gender studies which focus on discourses, examine the way in which discourses are constructed and used in terms of identity formation. The term 'discourse' is widely used in various disciplines, such as sociology, linguistics, literature and so on (Fairclough 1992, Foucault 1978, van Dijk 1985). Fairclough (1995) finds it helpful to distinguish the use of the term into two main senses. The first sense is mainly used in language studies as "social action and interaction, people interacting together in real social situations" (Fairclough, 1995: 18). The second definition, used mainly in post-structuralist social theory, examines discourse as a "social construction of reality, a form of knowledge" (Fairclough, 1995: 18). Gee (1996) attempts to synthesize these two understandings of

discourse into an understanding of the interpersonal functions of language and the social function of language. Gee (1996: 142) defines discourses as, "ways of being in the world, or forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, social identities, as well as gestures, glances, body positions and clothes". Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001: 20) similarly define discourse as

Socially situated forms of knowledge about (aspects of) reality. This includes knowledge of the events constituting that realist (who is involved, what takes place, where and when it takes place, and so on) as well as a set of related evaluations, purposes, interpretations and legitimations.

What is clear, is that 'discourses', as I am using the term, does not involve just talk or just language, but a combination of how we express ourselves. I use discourse analysis as a way of vertically penetrating the texts I analyse, and gaining a deeper understanding of how masculinity is constructed by men's lifestyle magazines.

A discursive account of gender has been most influentially articulated by Butler (1990/1999). Previous understandings of gender and sex, according to Butler, tend to "presuppose and pre-empt the possibilities of imaginable and realised gender configurations within culture" (1990: 9). Our understanding of gender and sex is thus constrained by pre-existing discourses. Butler is the key theorist in my study because she prefers "those historical and anthropological positions that understand gender as a *relation* among socially constituted subjects in specifiable contexts" as opposed to those studies, as seen above, which regard gender as an attribute (1990: 10). In line with Butler, this study regards gender as a fluid variable which is context specific. Gender is a performance and a discourse we both inhabit and employ. She continues that, "[t]here is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; ... identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results" (Butler, 1990: 25). The self is constituted on a daily basis; however, the performance of gender is not something one can choose to do or not to do. Gender is always a performance. As Butler argues,

To enter into the repetitive practices of this terrain of signification is not a choice, for the 'I' that might enter is always already inside: there is no possibility for agency or reality outside of the discursive practices that give those terms the intelligibility that they have. The task is not whether to repeat, but how to repeat

or, indeed, to repeat and, through a radical proliferation of gender, *to displace* the very gender norms that enable the repetition itself. (1990: 148).

We do not have a fixed gender identity that informs our behaviour; that behaviour constitutes our gender identity. This implies that gendered discourse is non-essentialist, transient and versatile.

This is not to say that certain gendered performances or discourses do not have more power than others. The mass media circulates certain male and female performances as preferable. Butler (1990: 171 – 190) argues that certain gender configurations are hegemonic and control social relations resulting in the naturalisation of certain gender performances and the denaturalisation of others. Butler (1993: 95) later clarified her theory of performativity,

Performativity cannot be understood outside of a process of iterability, a regularized and constrained repetition of norms. And this repetition is not performed *by* a subject; this repetition is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject. This iterability implies that ‘performance’ is not a singular ‘act’ or event, but a ritualized production, a ritual reiterated under and through constraint, under and through the force of prohibition and taboo, with the threat of ostracism and even death controlling and compelling the shape of the production.

Gender is then a parody of the idea of natural and original. There can be no ‘real’ or ‘authentic’ male or female performance because there are identity patterns and discourses that have become familiar, through their recurrent representations. However, what Butler argues is that there is nothing predetermined about gender. Identity is thus the sum of the things previously expressed about you. There is no ‘inner self’. We believe that it exists due to the repetition of its discourse through performance (Butler, 1990: 31). In relation to this thesis, masculine identity is constructed with the discourses available to men in popular resources such as the media, and more particularly, local men’s lifestyle magazines. These resources naturalise and reify notions of gender that support hegemonic masculinity, making them significant sites for the discursive analysis of masculinity. Butlers approach is appealing to this study because it acknowledges the reflexive process involved in producing gender in such contexts, the interconnections between various cultural discourses, and the frequent ambiguity that accompanies this process.

2.4 Constructions of discourses of masculinity in men's lifestyle magazines

Men's lifestyle magazines are a major source of masculine discourses in popular culture, their main aim being to provide men with a source of information about "being men". Shirato and Yell, assert, in their discussion of men's lifestyle magazines in Australia that magazines are a central point for discourses of male identity:

It is interesting to consider how this change in the profile of men's magazines impacts on discourses of masculine subjectivity. Magazines certainly constitute a significant site within the culture for the discursive production of subjectivity – to paraphrase Janice Winship (1987: 162; writing on women's magazines), they operate within a nexus of 'identity – consumption – desire'. Consequently, changes in the market and profile of the magazines indicate shifts in 'available discourses' ... for constructing identities.

(1999: 84)

Of course, this is not to say that all men read men's magazines, and every person who does read them makes active readings of the content. Nevertheless, men's lifestyle magazines are without a doubt a significant site for discourses of masculinity. It is useful to give a detailed examination of the ways masculinity is reflected, reproduced and even manipulated within the pages of these magazines. Thus, men's lifestyle magazines are an important source of masculine cultural information. We need to examine whether they are promulgators of 'old school' patriarchy and soft porn as Attwood (2005) and Whelehan (2000) argue, or whether they are offering up new and complex models of modern masculinity as suggested by Gauntlett? Alternative, are they offering more derivative discourses of masculinity?

The visual content of men's lifestyle magazines is largely focused on the body and it is therefore very important, when examining the discourses of masculinity available in these publications, to theorise the body. Connell (2003, 1995) argues that bodies are both agents and objects of practice and are therefore in a convoluted relationship with social processes, making them difficult to analyse. Body-reflexive practices, according to Connell (2003, 1995), refer to the notion that bodies are addressed by social processes and are thus drawn into history. In this process, Connell (2003, 1995) argues, bodies

become a point of reference. Gender is thus a constant social reference to bodies and what bodies do and not social practice reduced to the body (Connell, 2003, 1995). Through body-reflexive processes, the body becomes part of the gender performance, as theorised by Butler. While Butler does not overtly theorise the body, bodies are a visual representation and performance of our identities, and the analysis of such becomes a vital part of this study into the discursive construction of gender.

In terms of visual representation, Gill (2001), argues that male bodies have become the object of 'the gaze' of masculinity and that this has led to an anxiety in men about their appearance and performance as men. Gill (2001) submits that there has been a noticeable shift in consumer society to representations of aspirational and narcissistic masculinity whereby men's bodies have become objectified and sexualised in the media. This shift has been well documented (Bordo, 1999; MacKinnon, 1997; Nixon, 1996). According to Edwards (1997: 72-85) the shift was due to a number of elements. Firstly, in terms of economics, men have still advanced, despite perceived setbacks due to women entering the job market. Secondly, Edwards (1997: 72-85) submits that more men are living alone. Thirdly, individualism and aspirationalism that became popular in the 1980s in the UK. Fourthly, Edwards (1997: 85) maintains that the gay liberation movement popularised the use of the male image. Lastly, Edwards (1997: 72-85) argues that in the late 21st century it became more socially acceptable for men to consume. Edwards (1997) submits that these factors led to an increase in the use of images of masculinity to sell products in the 1980's. Spurred on by simple market economics, Edwards (1997) argues that the development of self-consciousness and narcissistic masculinity actively promoted the expansion of the men's lifestyle magazines market.

The shift towards a sexualised and objectified male body has been noticeably problematic within men's lifestyle magazines (Attwood, 2005: 88). It has been argued that this shift into the world of fashion and beauty moved masculinity towards a potentially feminine and homosexual space (MacKinnon, 1997; McNair, 2002; Attwood, 2005). Attwood (2005: 88) argues that men's lifestyle magazines responded by combining their traditional narcissism and hedonism with an assertion of "the

heterosexuality of the readers, often with a near defensive vengeance" (Edwards, 1997: 75), and the representation of women as "objects of sexual scrutiny" (Nixon, 1996: 165). This coincided with the emergence of the new lad persona who had a "more assertive articulation of the post-permissive masculine heterosexual script" (Nixon, 1996: 205). Attwood argues that:

A preoccupation with pornography, women's bodies and the mechanics of sex, alongside a disengagement from the emotional and ethical aspects of sexual relationships, works to contain 'woman as image' and allow men to distance themselves from the need to interact with women as social and sexual objects (2005: 96).

In Western thinking, the construction of self through the binary opposite of other, is prevalent in all language. Men's lifestyle magazines use binaries as a method of discursively constructing masculinity. In the discourses of consumerism, laddism and narcissism, men's lifestyle magazines objectify women discursively, defining masculinities in opposition to marginalised femininities.

Similarly, Whelehan (2000) submits that men's magazines represent a reassertion of old-fashioned masculine values. Whelehan (2000) argues that men's lifestyle magazines, like *FHM*, *Loaded* and *Maxim*, attempt to override the messages of feminism. She argues that these magazines create a 'laddish' world where changes in gender roles are dismissed through jokes and women are presented as mere sex objects (Whelehan, 2000: 1-6). Traditionally patriarchal, pre-feminist hegemonic masculine ideals are promoted by these magazines. Whelehan (2000: 1-6) is particularly concerned with the effects that these magazines have on gender relations, whereby men are encouraged to ignore feminist messages about gender equality. However, Whelehan recognises that the effects of these magazines are complicated and she notes that "to assume that these readers internalise the lad credo in its entirety is to underestimate the uses to which popular culture is put by individual consumers" (2000: 6). However, she does emphasize that,

[I]t is impossible to ignore the growth of this image and its depiction of masculinity ... its prevalence offers a timely warning to any woman who felt that gender relations were now freely negotiable (Whelehan, 2000: 6).

The textual devices used in men's lifestyle magazines such as humour, irony, metaphor and the glorification of excessive risk, which Whelehan (2000) argues to be a backlash

against feminism, open the text up to polysemic meanings. These devices can work dialogically against the hegemonic ideological structure of the text, such as clichés and stereotypes, allowing for more negotiated readings. Bakhtin (1981) developed the notion of dialogism to explain the effect of the multiple voices from different strata of society represented in a text. For Bakhtin, “dialogism is the characteristic epistemological mode of a world dominated by heteroglossia” (1981: 426). Heteroglossia is the existence of “multiple voices expressing multiple ideologies from different strata of language-in-use” (Price Herndl, 1991: 9). It is the domination of text by context, where meanings live in interactions, in dialogue which allow allows for multiple discourses within a text, often in direct conflict with one another. In this way, the text becomes a sight of struggle, in which meanings are negotiated and constructed, allowing for emerging masculinities within hegemonic patriarchal structures. Thus, the textual devices Whelehan (2000) claims to be a patriarchal backlash against feminism actually act as counter-hegemonic mechanisms.

Along with Gauntlett (2002), I argue against Whelehan’s (2000) view that men’s magazines reassert old-fashioned masculine values. Gauntlett, without defending the “dumb excesses” of some men’s magazines, argues that Whelehan’s argument is a rather superficial articulation of what men’s magazines are about (2002: 152). He argues that while on some pages the depictions of masculinity are perhaps regressive, overall, Whelehan’s (2000) argument appears to be somewhat one dimensional (Gauntlett, 2002: 153). Whelehan doesn’t consider what other effects men’s lifestyle magazines may be having beyond those against women. Gauntlett (2002: 153) argues that whilst certain articles and images in men’s magazines might support the argument that men’s magazines are a ‘backlash’ against feminism, this is not their primary purpose. Instead, Gauntlett (2002: 180) suggests that the popularity of men’s magazines show that men are trying to find their places as men in the modern, post-feminist world. Gauntlett (2002) adds that Whelehan’s (2000) assumptions about how the magazines will impact on men’s conceptions of masculinity, is “too casually damning and pessimistic” (2002: 153).

If, as Gauntlett (2002) suggests, we need to first assess the various types of masculinities being presented to men by the various men's lifestyle magazines before we can start to consider their impact, it follows that this thesis will begin to do just that by exploring the discourses of masculinities. What is particularly evident is the silence on this topic from local authors. This may be due to the fact that men's lifestyle magazines are a relatively new phenomenon in South Africa or the fact that there are so few titles in comparison to the range available to women. Thus, the question of this thesis stands as a lonely inquisition into the discourses of masculine identities constructed by South African men's magazines.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This study is situated within the vast and currently resurgent field cultural studies. Structural semiotics, neo-Marxist interpretations of ideology (particularly the writings of Althusser) and post-structuralists theory (particularly Foucault), have been the principal influences in the revival of work within cultural studies. Cultural studies is increasingly influencing the study of communication, marking a move towards a more positive approach to the products of mass-media as expressions of meaning of our post-modern society (cf. Hall, Hobson, Lowe & Willis, 1980). Cultural studies is thus concerned with previously coined 'marginal' discourses – also known as the products of popular culture, which were traditionally not regarded as legitimate objects of academic study.

An important aspect of the theoretical assumptions made by cultural studies is that it does not represent a single, monolithic approach (Fourie, 2001: 373). Rather, it combines aspects of various theoretical approaches, such as semiotics, psychoanalysis, feminism, ethnography and anthropology, amongst others. Cultural studies thus blend approaches and are unavoidably inter-disciplinary. A cultural study is not simply a study of culture, but looks generally at forms of self expression (Fourie, 2001: 373). A cultural study is thus not a homogenous theoretical field from which one can delimit one methodology and model for analysis. There are, however, three central terms in cultural studies: "meaning"; "knowledge"; and "power" (Fourie, 2001: 373). Cultural practices are chiefly regarded as a site of struggle for meaning – a fight over the power to assign meaning (Fourie, 2001: 373). This struggle is an ideological one, since it is about who has the power to decide what ideas and meanings are dominant in a society.

In broad terms, cultural studies, is mainly concerned with the issue of conflicting and opposing ideologies in society (Hall et al 1980: 15-47). Cultural studies refutes established views of culture as being reflexive and considers culture a socially constructed phenomenon, a signifying practice which is intrinsically interconnected with all other social practices within a society (Fourie, 2001: 373). This links strongly with the arguments of Giddens and Foucault addressed above. A further defining aspect of cultural studies is that the social production and reproduction of meaning is no longer merely a matter of signification but also a matter of power, once again closely linking with Foucault (Ang, 1990: 145). In cultural studies, the study of all forms of cultural expression and question of power constitute an ideological question.

3.2 Framework of Analysis

Articles from South African men's lifestyle magazines will be analysed individually to explore some of the discourses of masculinity they contain. This will be done using the following framework, derived from Social Semiotics and Critical Discourse Analysis, see Figure 1.

Social Semiotics and Critical Discourse Analysis are methodological frameworks, both arising from structuralist linguistic analysis. Social Semiotics involves the description of semiotic resources – examining what can be said and done with texts and how this can be interpreted in particular contexts (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001: 135). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) explores the power relationships between language as socially constitutive and language as constituted by society (Fairclough, 1995: 55). The primary focus of CDA is discourse and discursive practices, focusing on power while Social Semiotics focuses primarily on detailed textual analysis of the social context of texts.

Discussions about the underlying power relations in a text are not always foregrounded by this approach, which, according to Foucault (1987) are vitally important. CDA provides a complementary methodology to social semiotic analysis by enabling a different point of focus. Fairclough (1995: 67) argues that the mass media is a massive

network of orders of discourses, which can be usefully examined in terms of their discursive practices through CDA. This methodology is 'critical' because it views social practice and language as being bound together in terms of power relations (Fairclough, 1995: 55). CDA views language as being socially constituted and as constituting society (Fairclough, 1995: 55). CDA thinks of discursive practices in terms of community, or 'orders of discourses', which highlights the relationship between discourse and society (Fairclough, 1995: 55).

CDA involves a twin focus on the communicative event and the order of discourses. A social semiotic framework examines the communicative event in some detail while CDA analysis of the order of discourse examines how the discourse is structured in terms of power configurations of genres and discourses (Fairclough, 1995: 66). Fairclough (1995: 55) refers to the discursive practices of a community as "its normal ways of using language". CDA views these practices as existing within networks, or 'orders of discourse'. This concept highlights the relationships between different practices. 'Discourse' refers broadly to knowledge and knowledge construction, as discussed above. 'Genres', in contrast, refers to language use "associated with and constituting part of some particular social practice" (Fairclough, 1995: 56). CDA focuses on shifts within the orders of discourse and in its relationship to other socially adjacent orders of discourse. Thus CDA examines power relationships, interactions and complicities between social institutions and their orders of discourses (Fairclough, 1995: 66).

Social Semiotics can be used as a methodological framework in three ways. Firstly, analysis can focus on describing semiotic resources. Van Leeuwen & Jewitt (2001: 135) define resources as a set of conventions that connect signs and meaning. This understanding of resources links well with Giddens' (1991) and Foucault's (1987) model of identity as constructed from available resources in a self-reflexive project (as discussed above). Different conventions apply in different contexts, and Van Leeuwen & Jewitt submit that,

Semiotic resources are at once the products of cultural histories and the cognitive resources we use to create meaning in the production and interpretation of visual and other messages (2001: 136).

Semiotic resources are thus specific and constructed and much can be learned about society through its resources. Secondly, social semiotic analysis can describe and explain how the semiotic resources are used (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001: 136). This process draws on many other sources to explain these findings. Lastly, social semiotics can be used to expand the notion of semiotic resources (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001: 140). This thesis will work mainly within the second role of social semiotic analysis.

Functionalist in nature, social semiotics sees resources as having been developed to do specific kinds of semiotic work (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001: 140). Kress & Van Leeuwen (1996), draw on Halliday's three metafunctions, ideational, interpersonal and textual when they argue that there are three types of semiotic work; representational; interactive and compositional. These three analytical categories form the framework for this analysis of men's lifestyle magazines.

Representational meaning is conveyed by all participants in the text. Magazines are a complicated palimpsest of representational meaning – both written and visual. The emphasis of examination is on the 'syntax' of the text as a source of representational meaning, which Van Leeuwen & Jewitt (2001: 141) refer to as sequencing order. Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) describe syntactic patterns in terms of the way they relate participants to each other to create meaning. Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) present two types of patterns. Narrative structures are recognised by the presence of a reader, they create a line, or 'vector' that connects participants and reader (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001: 141). Narrative structures relate the participants in terms of action, happenings in the image (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001: 141). Conceptual structures represent participants in generalised definitions (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001: 143). In particular, this thesis will examine discursive categorical classifications such as 'metrosexual' and 'retrosexual' and binary oppositions. Stadler and O'Shaughnessy (2005: 255) define binary oppositions as, "a means of cultural classification that splits the world into sets of dualistic opposing categories such as male/female, black/white."

Interactive meaning creates relationships between viewers and the world inside the text (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001: 145). Magazines are created to be bought by their readers. Understanding the interactive relationship between the magazine and its audience is thus vital. Many texts contain participants who make direct contact with the reader. Such contact demands something of the reader. It demands a reader. Point of view positions the reader. It also contributes to the power relations between reader and text. In line with Gauntlett (2001) and Stevenson et al (1999), as discussed above, irony will also be examined. Stadler and O'Shaughnessy (2005: 419) argue that irony is, "to mean the opposite of what you mean. Something is ironic when it indirectly contradicts its surface meaning." Irony presupposes an audience as Irony requires an audience to 'get it'. Gitlin notes, "[the cultural critic] Paul Fussell has made the point that irony became standard in English writing after World War 1 as a way to navigate around the unspeakable" (Gitlin, 1993).

Modality interactively creates a relationship between the reader and text through the establishment of textual credibility. Modality is the social semiotic approach to representations of truth (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996: 159). The question of modality is the question of reliability of messages. Society routinely attaches more credibility to certain messages than others (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996: 159). Society judges the credibility of texts on the basis of modality markers in the message which cue credibility (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996: 159). Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996: 159) argue that these, "modality markers have been established by the groups within which we interact as relatively reliable guides to the truth or factuality of messages, and they have developed out of the central values, beliefs and social needs of that group". Lastly, intertextuality between these men's lifestyle magazines and other resources will be examined because contemporary media are hybrid concoctions of intertextual references, which need deconstructing and analysing. Each of these factors highlights and determines the relationship between the participants in the text and the readers of the magazines.

The third level of meaning examined by social semiotics is compositional meaning, which examines the more technical details of the text. Composition is a critically

important aspect of any analysis of magazines because a lot of work goes into the composition of magazines, making it a significant site of meaning production. Four main factors will be analysed in the Magazines articles at this level. Firstly, framing either connects or disconnects the elements of composition through the utilisation of compositional resources such as colour (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001: 150). The salience of certain compositional elements is also an important factor for analysis – why one element is more eye catching than another says much about value and meaning (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001: 150). Lastly, because magazines are a complicated combination of visual and verbal texts, the relationship between these two modes of communication will be examined, because this relationship is often the site of less obvious conflict.

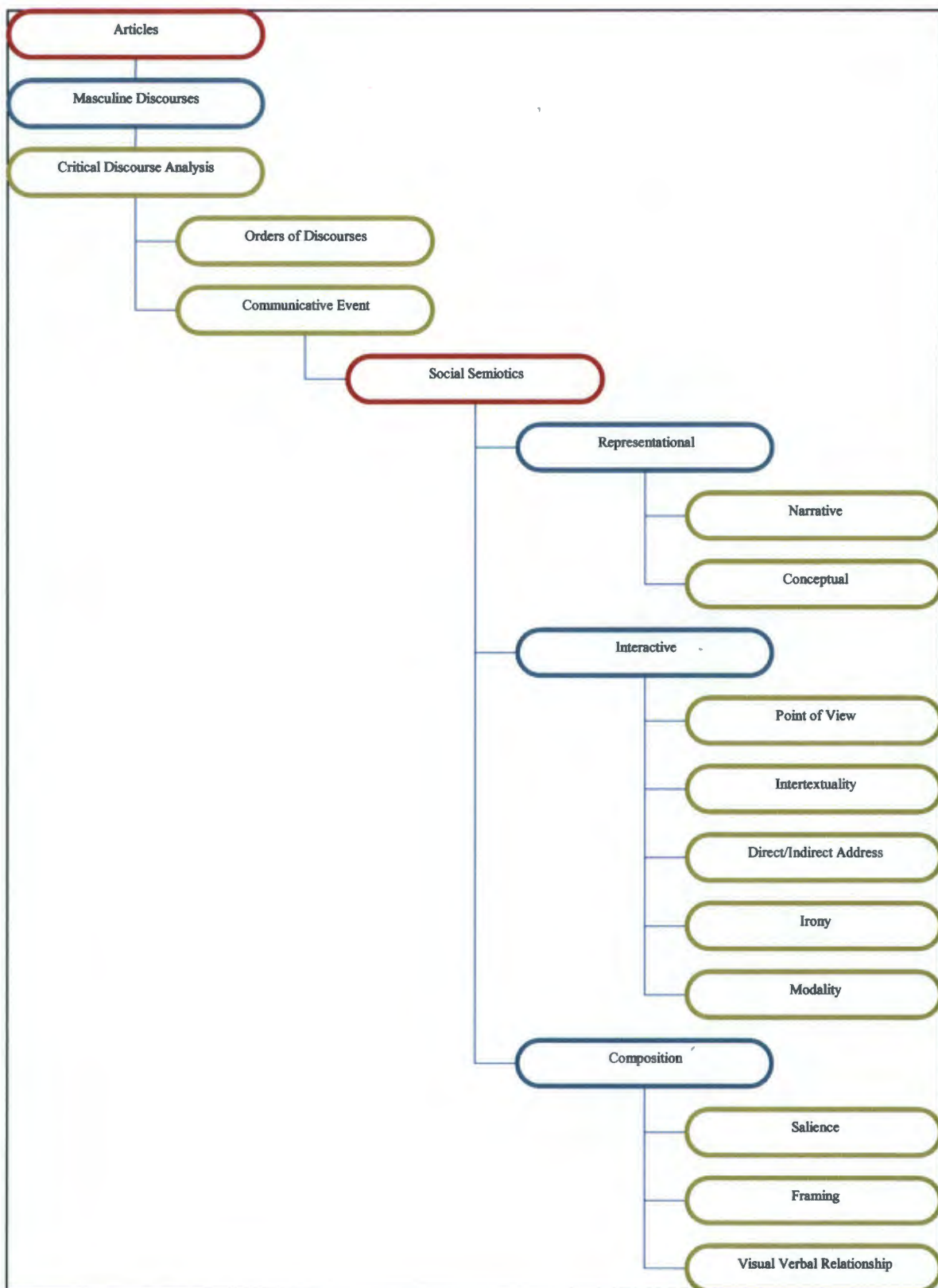


Figure 6. Framework of Analysis

3.3 Data

One copy of every men's lifestyle magazine published in South Africa was purchased on 14 May 2006. The following was purchased:

- *Blink* Magazine March 2006
- *GQ* Magazine May 2006
- *FHM* Magazine June 2006
- *Men's Health* Magazine May 2006

Each magazine has at least one article focusing on what it means to be a man, providing a clear example of discourses of masculinity. The following articles will be examined:

- Makgoasi, D. (2006) "Modern Male Identity", *Blink* Magazine, March 2006, 14-16. This article examines the masculine world of South African boxing, and it means to be a man within this context.
- Muhlenberg, D. (2006) "Tough Guys", *GQ* Magazine, May 2006, 58-62. This article is an ironic examination of the so termed 'übersexual', the ultra masculine version of the 'metrosexual'.
- Andriesse, A. (2006) "Pablo and the Charlie Factory", *FHM*, June 2006, 68-74. A typical profile feature, this article looks at the life and death of Pablo Escobar, the infamous Columbian Drug King-Pin.
- Green, J. (2006) "Cuban Muscle Crisis", *Men's Health* Magazine, May 2006, 142-147. This article follows the trials of Cuban muscle builders who strive for the 'perfect' male body in a poverty stricken communist country.

3.4 Description of Data

All the men's lifestyle magazines available in South Africa cover aspects of the male experience not previously covered in magazines for men. They all include reviews of films, video games, music, and clubs/restaurants. Apart from that, the magazines are all quite different from one another.

3.4.1 *FHM*

FHM is a very successful magazine by any standards. In the UK, it is the biggest selling lifestyle magazine – selling more copies than any other magazine – male or female (Gauntlett, 2002: 156). The US version was launched in February 2000 and by July 2001 its circulation had topped 1 million. By 2002 *FHM* was available in 15 countries, including Australia, Singapore, Malaysia, Turkey, France and South Africa. It has become the most successful magazine available on the South African market, outstripping even its oldest, more established, women's magazine rivals.

The UK editor who oversaw its rise to power, Mike Soutar, said that “*FHM* understood how men communicate, and principally that's through humour ... In a group of men there's no-one more respected than the funniest guy.” (2000: 1). He said further that *FHM*'s success was due to understanding the 20-something-guy: “when part of you wants to settle down and get a mortgage, but part of you thinks your mates are more important and you want to shag anything that moves” (Soutar, 2000: 1). He added that “whatever [men are] like on the outside, on the inside we're just a seething mass of insecurities and we are simply unable to do things in the house very well” (Soutar, 2000: 1).

When the US version was announced, Editor Ed Needham said that “if men can do it, read it, buy it, think about it, or spend their money on it – they will find it in *FHM*. We created our publication based on three guiding principles. Everything in the magazine must be one or more of the following: funny, sexy, useful” (WriteNews, 2000). This mantra was first used by Soutar at the UK edition in the mid-1990's and it has become the international *FHM* editorial brand (Garret, 1997). Later, Dana Fields, US *FHM*'s executive publisher said *FHM* would address the following: “personal issues that men would never talk about among themselves, like relationships and face cream” (Crabtree, 2000). She said further that “The magazine is like a male *Cosmo*. It freely acknowledges that men are insecure and have a lot of questions about their bodies.” (Crabtree, 2000).

There are, of course, the pictures of scantily clad women accompanied by the titillating interviews which have become *FHM*'s trademark. These interviews are by their nature overwhelmingly heterosexual, despite their mingling with well toned, conventionally handsome men in the fashion pages. The content varies from country to country according to the national norms and conventions. In Singapore *FHM* is more conservative and the French version more risqué. When publishers EMAP launched *FHM* in South Africa, their marking blurb described the magazine as follows:

Before *FHM*, conventional wisdom had it that women read magazines from an introspective point of view, seeking help and advice for and about themselves. Men on the other hand, read magazines about things like sport, travel, science, business and cars. *FHM* realises that men will read magazines about themselves if you give them the information in the right context: irreverent, humorous and *never* taking itself too seriously. The articles in *FHM*, although highly informative, are written tongue-in-cheek. The fashion is accessible, the advice humorous and empathetic.

(www.natmagz.com, 1999).

The South African version is very similar to the UK version, but overall, the mix of material remains the same internationally.

3.4.2 Men's Health

Men's Health has a broader focus than the titles admits and is perhaps the most similar title to the women's titles available in South Africa. The magazine focuses on the body and appearance, featuring articles on fitness, weight loss and health. There is also a high psychological content, with advice columns dealing with a multitude of personal problems, focusing on the use of positive thinking to improve self esteem and work. *Men's Health* also uniquely acknowledges their readers relationships, with articles and advice columns on how to keep the romance going. Overall the magazine is a clever 'masculine' wrapping of everything women's magazines are about.

3.4.3 GQ

Internationally, *GQ* prides itself as being the most upmarket, style conscious men's lifestyle magazine. *GQ* aims to be the polished, upmarket version of *FHM*. The South African version advertises its international identity as, "The International Magazine for South African Men". Due to recent circulation wars, the magazine, particularly in South Africa, nowadays combines its old school charm with more *FHM*-type content. The magazine has added to its expensive fashion, smart grooming and golden lifestyle, a bevy of women in bikinis. On the May 2006 cover of *GQ*, Jennifer Aniston is featured topless on a bed, with her knee covering her breasts.

3.4.4 Blink Magazine

Blink is a South African original aimed at successful black urban men and features the cultural mix which makes South Africa unique. It features head and torso shots of successful black men. Its bi-line is: "The Key to Being a Man". Its content and tone is similar to *GQ*, but without *GQ*'s recent decline into laddish silliness. The magazine features comparatively less women in the magazine, and even less nudity. Most women are fully clothed and interviewed at length about themselves. The magazine contains a lot of aspirational content – reviews on expensive cars and luxury items. It has advice columns on money and health, but the rest of its content represents serious journalism on issues such as black empowerment, the state of black universities and powerful women.

Chapter 4

GQ magazine

Excessive irony in the construction of masculinity

4.1 Introduction

1. Guns don't kill people. Chuck Norris kills People.
2. There is no theory of evolution. Just a list of animals Chuck Norris allows to live.
3. Chuck Norris does not sleep. He waits.
4. The chief export of Chuck Norris is Pain.
5. There is no chin under Chuck Norris' Beard. There is only another fist.
6. Chuck Norris has two speeds. Walk, and Kill.
7. The leading causes of death in the United States are: 1. Heart Disease 2. Chuck Norris 3. Cancer
8. Chuck Norris drives an ice cream truck covered in human skulls.
9. Chuck Norris is my Homeboy.
10. Chuck Norris doesn't go hunting.... CHUCK NORRIS GOES KILLING

<http://www.chucknorrisfacts.com/>

Chuck Norris is the object of an Internet phenomenon known as *Chuck Norris Facts* which began circulating in late 2005. These lists document and proclaim fictional, often heroic feats and characteristics of Norris. The *GQ* article, "Tough Guys" (2006) imports the Chuck Norris parody into South African print media to provide ironic comedic relief in an article which discusses masculinity. This chapter analyses the *GQ* article, "Tough Guys" (2006) using the critical discourse/social semiotics analysis model to understand the use of irony in the discourses of contemporary South African men's lifestyle magazines. While there is some debate as to why men's lifestyle magazines utilise an ironic discourse, in line with Jackson et al (2001), this chapter argues that irony is used in men's lifestyle magazines to create distance between the readers and emotional issues to create a comfortable environment for the readers to explore the issues. Irony is realised in

the *GQ* article through a process of 'statement and negation', the construction of binaries and the construction of classification hierarchies. This chapter identifies and analyses the discourses used in "Tough Guys" (2006), by applying the analysis model put forward by this thesis. Based in linguistics, this model locates meaning on three levels, representational, interactive and compositional. Representational patterns, modality, composition and authorial space realise the excessive irony used in the article.

In the last two decades, there has been a significant focus in popular culture on the labelling and boxing of masculinity. First there was the 'new man', then the 'lad', then the 'new lad' and now we have the 'metrosexual' and most recently, the 'übersexual'. There has been considerable pressure exerted on men by popular culture to fit one of these moulds. The article in *GQ*, "Tough Guys" (2006), articulates possibly anxiety provoking ambiguity in contemporary masculinity. However the discursive construction of masculine identity in *GQ* magazine is ironic and cynical. Irony is a figure of speech in which the intended meaning of a phrase or word is the opposite of that meaning expressed by the word or phrase used. Irony can allow you to express an unpleasant truth while claiming that is not what you actually meant. Gitlin notes that, "[the cultural critic] Paul Fussell has made the point that irony became standard in English writing after World War 1 as a way to navigate around the unspeakable" (Gitlin, 1993). Jackson, Stevenson and Brooks (2001: 103) argue that using irony in men's magazines is a form of "self-distancing or illusion whereby the speaker/author wished to conceal from themselves as well as from the listener/reader what is being articulated". Jackson et al. (2001) argue that certain men's lifestyle magazines go beyond every day irony and move into an excessively ironic space. This analysis will argue that the article, "Tough Guys" analysed from *GQ* magazine utilises excessive irony as a form of self-distancing.

4.2 Metrosexual, Übersexual, Retrosexual

The terms 'metrosexual', 'retrosexual' and 'übersexual' are popular culture neologisms, that is, they are recently coined terms applied to new pop culture concepts. These are new 'fad' masculinities currently circulating through popular culture. In fact, *GQ* magazine

had a very similar article running at the same time which has been analysed in the *GQ* chapter.

The 'metrosexual' is the oldest term from which the terms 'retrosexual' and übersexual originated. The earliest traceable use the term can be found in an article written by Mark Simpson, a popular culture critic, titled "Here come the mirror men", published in 1994 in *The Independent*, a major British daily. Simpson (1994) coined the term to define urban men who spent a great deal of time and money on their appearance. Few print publication references to the term can be found during the rest of the 1990's. The neologism gained popularity in British print from June 2003 following a second article written by Simpson, and began its rise in popularity in South African print media the following year. Based on popular stereotypes, Simpson (2003: page unknown) explores the source of the 'metrosexual':

Gay men provided the early prototype for metrosexuality. Decidedly single, definitely urban, dreadfully uncertain of their identity (hence the emphasis on pride and the susceptibility to the latest label) and socially emasculated, gay men pioneered the business of accessorising – and combining – masculinity and desirability.

What is of significant interest here is the distance created by Simpson (2003) between traditional patriarchal masculinity and metrosexuality. Simpson (2003) chooses to align the term with homosexual masculinity rather than explaining it as a growing trend within traditional forms of socially acceptable masculinity.

The word 'übersexual' (from German *über* = *above, superior* and Latin *sexus* = *gender*) was coined by the authors of the book *Future of Men*, O'Reilly, Matathia and Salzman (2005). It is a neologism for a distinctly patriarchal formation of masculinity which harks back to the patriarchal belief in men's superior erudite intellect. O'Reilly et al. (2005) argue that this masculinity is a survival mechanism developed by men in opposition to contemporary society. The übersexual is unavoidably refined due to his higher intellect. It could be argued then, that the übersexual is merely a subset of the 'metrosexual' because they share a refined nature. However, O'Reilly et al (2005) vehemently refuse to conflate the terms, arguing that the 'übersexual' is not a derivative of the 'metrosexual' but rather a pre-existing notion of masculinity to be rediscovered by men.

The 'retrosexual' seems to be a masculine backlash against the 'metrosexual' even more so than the 'übersexual'. Where the 'übersexual' is a heightened form of masculinity, the 'retrosexual' is the masculinity of 30 years ago. The term surfaced in popular culture at the end of 2005. In an article that heralded the popularity of this term in print media, Bordelon (2006) describes the 'retrosexual' as follows:

By contrast, a "retrosexual" is a manly man, an alpha male who may have the physique of a Shar-Pei dog (a little wrinkly and flabby, yet endearing), the manners of a 5-year-old (the kind who makes armpit farting noises at the dinner table) and the ability to pull you in for a hot, sweaty kiss and then go right out and fix your darn car.

(Bordelon, 2006: page unknown)

In another article from July 2006, Stewart (2006) argues that the 'retrosexual' is a backlash by men who feel emasculated and marginalized by metrosexuality and the new feminist order of the contemporary world. All three terms are a masculine reaction against the post feminist era that men currently find themselves in, with gender roles up for re-negotiation. Perhaps metrosexuality, retrosexuality and 'übersexuality' are a means of negotiating the schism between the sexes through a shift toward androgyny or hyper-masculinity.

4.3 Description of the article and Intertextual Context



Figure 7. Page 58 with large image of Ali

The article is laid out in two sections on two sequential spreads. The first spread, on pages 58 and 59, is a short feature article on the 'übersexual'. On page 58 there is a full page photograph of Muhammed Ali standing over Sonny Liston after he knocked him unconscious in the boxing ring in Maine, USA, on 25 May, 1965 (see figure 7). Superimposed onto the image is a famous quote from Ali,

I done wrassled with an alligator, I done tussled with a whale, handcuffed lightnin', threw thunder in jail. Only last week I

murdered a rock, injured a stone, hospitalised a brick, I'm so mean I make medicine sick



Figure 8. Page 59 with 'tough guy' triangle

On the opposite page, the article's title, "Tough Guys" is emblazoned at the top in a block font which fades from black into grey (see figure 8). Beneath the title, in white, is the subtitle, "No Excuses, No Apologies, Not Now, Not Ever". The text follows beneath this in a black Arial font on a pumpkin-orange background. Beneath the text, in a triangle, are photographs of (from left to right) Sylvester Stallone, Steve McQueen, Chuck Norris and Harrison Ford. The images of Chuck Norris and Muhammed Ali are in black and white while the others are in full colour.



Figure 9. The Quiz

On the following page, page 60, there is the "Tough Guy Quiz" (see figure 9). The Quiz is titled "Man or Mouse? Or Chuck?" The words "Man or Mouse?" are in grey and "Or Chuck?" is in the same pumpkin-orange as the background of page 59. The page is divided into four columns. In columns 1, 3 and 4, the text follows the same layout. The numbered question is in white, highlighted in black, the number is grey. Beneath, are three answers labelled (in orange) as A, B, C and D. The second column contains pictures of Woody Allen, Baden Powell, Chuck Norris and Bruce Willis. Underneath these images, upside down, are the results of the quiz. The images of Allen, Powell and Willis are in black and white but the image of Norris is in Sepia.

Norris is highlighted by the change in colour saturation drawing attention to the 'Chuck Norris phenomenon', which is referred to continuously in this article. While Norris plays a tough, man's-man in his television series, *Walker Texas Ranger*, he has also starred in numerous B-grade television action shows. His success is an interesting one. Norris began his Hollywood career as a Karate instructor and champion fighter. In 1968 he

became the Professional World Middleweight Karate Champion, holding the title undefeated until he retired in 1974. Norris then went on to star in a string of action movies that were minor box office hits in the late 1980's and early 1990's such as *Delta Force* (1986) and *The Hitman* (1991). Norris usually played heroes that despite having harmful martial arts skills would always rather find a better solution than fighting.

Norris regained popularity as an internet cult icon during the mid-2000's. The craze seemed to have sprung out of the popular US television show *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*. O'Brien created a new segment in which he screened short, out of context clips for comedic purposes. The segment soon became the most popular part of the show and the craze caught on. Five years on and the internet is filled with a bevy of Chuck Norris jokes, mostly playing around with the fact that he was such a skilled fighter in his movies that he could do anything, and that made him the ultimate man. These sites have large fan followings, a trend obviously picked up now in *GQ*.

4.4 Construction of the Author – Reader Relationship

Humour, and more particularly, irony, requires an equal relationship between author and reader. The *Chuck Norris Facts* phenomenon is used to construct the author – reader relationship in this article. The most effective and obvious direct address of the reader by the author is the quiz on page 60. The quiz necessitates the presence of the reader, connecting the author and the reader. The reader is addressed as a participant, and a buddy. The tone is conversational, for example, the last question says –

15. A threatening gang of youths approaches, so you:

A – Trip your girlfriend as a diversion then hightail out of there

B – Display every Kung-Fu position you know from the Spitting-Cobra to the Crazy-Monkey, then go straight for their testicles with your teeth.

C – Shriek, bite, pinch and bitchslap

D – Break the first guys face, then use his jawbone to beat off the rest. Later you mount it with the rest of your trophy kills above the fireplace.

The question and answers have an air of familiarity about them. For example, the use of the second person, “You” and “Your” establishes the reader as an active and equal participant in the text. Furthermore, the choice of lexis such as “hightail” and “bitchslap” are conversational and crass. If there were a hierarchical relationship between the author

and the reader, the lexis and terms of address would reflect this, however, in this case, a relationship of equal standing is established. Satire, irony and comic humour, which exist within the quiz and overall text, all require the reader to 'get it'. The humour would be diluted if the author elevated himself above the reader because for comedy to flow easily the receiver of said humour needs to be on the same level as the author. For example, the above answer D, "Break the first guys face, then use his jawbone to beat of the rest. Later you mount it with the rest of your trophy kills above the fireplace." (60). This answer presumes that the reader has the same level of popular culture knowledge as the author, who bases this text on the *Chuck Norris Facts* parody currently circulating in popular culture.

4.5 Statement and Negation

The humour surrounding the *Chuck Norris Facts* in the *GQ* article relies heavily on irony. Irony is principally realised in this narrative genre through the syntactic pattern of 'statement and negation'. The article presents the 'übersexual' as an alternative masculinity and then through ironic plays on words and the concept of Chuck Norris, it damns the 'übersexual' in favour of the 'metrosexual', or new lad. The article begins with a formal introduction to the 'übersexual', "Ladies and gentlemen, and now the moment you've all been waiting for...um, no, not really, but in case you were wondering, the latest media hyped term, fresh from the diseased imaginings of a trend forecaster is – the übersexual." (59). This statement marks the beginning of a 'statement and negation' pattern that is played out in the article. The 'statement and negation' pattern ironically expresses the unpleasant truth (that the readers of *GQ* are interested in 'new' forms of masculinity) and then claims that it was not actually what the journalist meant.

'Statement and negation' patterns continue throughout the article, becoming embedded into the narrative. The narrative of the article explores who the 'tough guy' is, and why he is 'cool' in a basic 'DIY manual' style. For example, "[a] 'tough guy' is able to get through life without ever becoming addicted to his vice, because rehab is for quitters." (59). Here, 'tough guys' are stated to be too strong for physical addiction. The statement

is negated by the appended joke about rehab being a weakness. The ironic effect of this patterning is that the more serious statement about addiction is fronted as the joke falls away. In another example, the journalist writes, “Although positive towards women a tough guy doesn’t need to seek their approval; why should he feel guilty about being the stronger sex?” (59) Here, the backlash against feminism negates the positive message of individuality. While neither the statement nor the negating joke necessarily or literally expresses an ironic truth, the ironic truth is certainly that there is an underlying unease surrounding women’s roles. The over-the-top, excessive masculinity, makes the article sound comically sardonic. However, underneath the ‘we’re just playing’ flippant language use and attitude lies a more serious questioning of gender roles. Thus, what is occurring here is converse irony: the journalist asserts that he does not mean what he writes up-front using a humorous tone to express a deeper unpleasant truth. Unease with emerging popular discourses of masculinity reveals itself through this convoluted use of irony.

4.6 Metrosexual vs. übersexual: Binaries and the realisation of excessive irony

The underlying unease about shifting popular masculinity is expressed further through binary opposition in both the article and the quiz. Categorisation begins on page 58, albeit with non-traditional terminology. The text is dealing with new popular culture neologisms (a term used for words recently ‘invented’ by popular culture), the ‘übersexual’ – “a hybrid of Neanderthal man and the metrosexual” (58). This term has been coined by trend forecaster, Marian Salzman, who also coined the term ‘metrosexual’ – “a straight man who has all the characteristics of a gay” (59). This part of the article establishes and frames the categories used later on in page 60 with an ironic account of how the category of ‘übersexual’ allows men to be real men. After introducing the new binary opposite popular masculinities, the article examines what it means to be a ‘tough guy’ or ‘übersexual’. While the first half of the text on page 58 differentiates the ‘metrosexual’ from the ‘übersexual’, the second half of the text dictates a ‘how to’ on ‘übersexuals’ or ‘tough guys’.

Because the 'übersexual' is a new term to be placed in opposition to the 'metrosexual', the attributes of this 'new' masculinity must necessarily be explored for this identity to manifest. The article lists 'tough guy' attributes as being "about attitude" (59). A 'tough guy' gets through life "without ever becoming addicted to his vice", a 'tough guy' "has absolute confidence in his masculinity" (59). Furthermore, a 'tough guy' is "the embodiment of something deep inside man – desire, guts, vision" and so on. This article is using, on the one hand, a discourse of essentialist masculinity. It infers that being a 'tough guy' is a natural state for all men. However, on the other hand, the article is using irony to express an unpleasant truth, not that all men are naturally 'tough guys' or 'übersexuals', but that there are ambiguities of contemporary masculinity. The 'metrosexual' identity is narratively presented as the current state of being for the readers *GQ*, as can be seen in the following statement, "Don't get us wrong, we at *GQ* believe that smelling nice is great, looking good is smart and are grateful that most of you don't wear white socks with black shoes anymore. However, while guiding you it seems as if a lot of you were robbed of your manliness" (59). The 'metrosexual' is presented in this text as being the norm as common attributes of this identity are praised in the text. The presentation of 'übersexuals' as an alternative to the 'metrosexual' is symptomatic of uneasiness with modern male identity.

4.7 Classification hierarchies and Visual Irony

The article's composition uses visual irony to reaffirm the ongoing textual irony through the construction of classification hierarchies. Compositionally, the framing and salience of the article work together to make connections and meaning within the text (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996). Framing connects the various compositional elements in this text through the utilisation of various compositional resources. Analysis of compositional salience (one element being more eye-catching than another) assists in uncovering the deeper meaning construction within the text as does an examination of modality or the representation of reality.



Figure 10. Ali as he knocks out an opponent.

Two images are particularly salient on pages 58 and 59. Firstly, the key image of Muhammed Ali as he knocks out an opponent is salient on page 58 (see figure 10). Secondly, the image of Chuck Norris holding two guns on page 59 is particularly salient. The image of Muhammed Ali is salient because it dominates the entire page 58, and his body dominates the image as he stands victorious over his opponent. Mohammed's face is

particularly salient as it is counter balanced by a caption on the bottom half of the page. The caption and his face work together, combining into an overall focus on his monstrous masculinity. The caption reads:

I done wrassled with an alligator, I done tussled with a whale, handcuffed lightnin', threw thunder in jail. Only last week I murdered a rock, injured a stone hospitalised a brick, I'm so mean I make medicine sick' – Mohammed Ali (58).

On the top half of the page, counterbalancing this quote, we see Mohammed Ali's face, as he stands over Sonny Liston. Mohammed's face is aggressive and he appears to be shouting out something. When combined with the image, the caption, particularly the highlighted section, 'wrassled with an alligator', anchors the image, allowing the reader to interpret a salient image of Mohammed Ali having slain a great opponent.



Figure 11. The visual classification hierarchy.

On page 59, the image of Chuck Norris is most salient due to its syntactic patterning amongst other images in a visual classification hierarchy (see figure 11). The image of Norris is positioned at the pinnacle of a visual triangle. To Norris's right is a smaller image of Harrison Ford and

to Norris's left are smaller images of Steve McQueen and Sylvester Stallone. These subsidiary images frame Norris, and push his image forward. The image of Norris is also substantially larger than the other three, and is in black and white, whereas the others are in full colour. The Chuck Norris cult is an ironic celebration of the anti-hero – he has become so 'cool'

because he is completely 'un-cool'. This is expressed ironically through the chosen image. The image is so stereotypical that it is comical; Norris is glaring at the reader holding two automatic rifles. What this culminates in is a pyramid, with Norris both at the top and in the front, and most certainly the most salient. Once again, this image is relational to its caption counterpart, this time in the form of the top line, "TOUGH GUY'S, NO EXCUSES, NO APOLOGIES, NOT NOW, NOT EVER" (59).

What the visual relationship between the images of these men does is three fold. Firstly, it frames all the men shown visually on the pages as being 'tough guys'. Secondly, it frames Norris as being the toughest guy out of the pyramid, and thirdly, it says that Ali is the toughest guy on either page. This is because he is shown graphically as being much larger than the other men, he is given the most space, and his facial expression is one of conquering hero, rather than the deep stares seen on page 59. Thus, there is a clear syntactic patterning in a classification pyramid evident. Sylvester Stallone's image is the smallest, and only shows his head. Harrison Ford is next in line, with a slightly bigger image and slightly more body shown. Steve McQueen and Norris have the same amount of body shown, but McQueen's image is smaller than Norris's, who is also shown in black and white, which matches the image of Ali. Ali is the most salient image, as it is biggest (a whole page), black and white and directly captioned to draw attention. Norris and Ali are thus, through salience, given more prominent positions, and are thus given more value. In terms of the theme of the text, this means they are seen as being the most 'tough guys', Ali being the 'ultimate' 'tough guy'.

Both the images of Norris and Ali convey extreme masculinity through violence, a point not stressed in the written text. Norris is represented on page 59 with not one, but two guns. These guns are not typical hand guns commonly seen on television, but heavier, automatic machine guns. These guns can kill many more people in a shorter length of time, making them and Chuck more deadly. Ali is shown on page 58 as having knocked a man unconscious with his bare hands. Norris is shown in character while Ali knocked the unidentified man out in reality. However, the difference between the representations of Norris and Ali is not recognised visually or verbally. In the verbal text, Norris is referred

to as a mythically excessively masculine man who, “doesn’t take no for an answer and can settle most disputes with a round house kick” (59). Classification hierarchies extend irony into the visual realm of this text.

4.8 Composition and Irony

By placing Muhammed Ali and Chuck Norris as salient equals, the composition of this article contributes to the overall irony of the piece. Compositionally, these two images are placed as ‘übersexual’ salient equals. However, it is clear that the verbal reference to Chuck Norris as being a masculine role model is an ironic popular culture reference whereby Chuck Norris is ‘cool’ because he is so clearly not ‘cool’. Muhammed Ali has an undeniable reputation as a champion boxer, a sport commonly constructed as being extremely masculine. Both the visual and verbal texts offer Ali and Norris up ironically as being equally ‘übersexual’. However, these texts are both relying on popular culture knowledge held by the reader to translate this ironic statement. The authorial position expressed through irony is that Ali and Norris are not equals. Norris and Ali are visually and verbally presented as equal. Both forms of representation rely on previously held cultural knowledge of the reader to reveal the authorial position behind the ironic statement that Ali and Norris are in fact not equals.

The syntactic hierarchy seen in the visual text is mimicked in the quiz. The use of intertextuality and the classification hierarchy to realise irony is continued in the quiz. It is a quiz designed to test men’s ‘tough guy’-ness. It is loaded with irony and directly addresses the readers. The title directly invites the readers to participate in the quiz. The title, “Man or Mouse? Or Chuck?” is a challenge to the reader. Slightly off centre, but made salient due to the solidity of graphics while surrounded by text, there are four head shots of men, labelled 6A 6B 6C 6D, which relate to question number 6 – “Your hero is:”. The men are Woody Allen, Baden Powell, Chuck Norris and Bruce Willis. While the results of the quiz will determine what kind of man you are, these photographs allow a visual representation of the four main types of men stereotyped within this quiz. Woody Allen’s photograph is stereotypically ‘geekish’. He is wearing his famous thick glasses,

his hair is combed into a stereotypically 'geekish' side parting, and his facial expression is a mix of fear and humour. Baden Powell, the founder of the boy scouts, was a hardened adventurer, who scaled mountains. He is wearing a hat commonly associated with the Canadian mountain police or Mounties – rugged outdoorsmen.

Each of the answers to the quiz fit within the above categories. Each answer is funny, aimed at making the readers laugh, thus establishing direct contact with the readers. For example, in question 1:

1. The thing that scares you most is:

- A. Commitment
- B. Not climbing all seven summits before you die.
- C. Penny Heyne's shoulders
- D. Swimming in a pilchard-infused sealskin leotard off Robben Island. (60)

These answers are a mixture between serious (option A) and completely ridiculous (option D). This mixture creates an overall humorous tone, while placing men into stereotypical, hierarchically established boxes such as the 'geek' represented by option A, for example, "You haven't left home since your mom confiscated your plastic bubble" (60). Option B represents the 'hero' and the answers work within this stereotype, for example, "At your funeral, they will: B. Stuff your tomb with pets, girlfriends and anything else you're attached to, have a 21 000 gun Soweto gun salute and erect a revolving golden statue of our likeness for the nations eternal adoration" (60). Option C represents the 'ordinary funny guy', the answers works within the realms of the 'ordinary' South African male experience, peppered with toilet humour. For example, "Your perfect holiday is: C. Valley of the waves at Sun City" (60). The humour of this example lies in the fact that the "Valley of the waves at Sun City" is an extremely popular artificial beach with artificial waves at a big casino more than a thousand kilometres away from the sea. Option D represents the excessively masculine 'übersexual', for example, "Your earliest memory is: D. Clawing your way out of the abortion bucket" (60).

The quiz not only hierarchically orders the masculine models, but creates a reader hierarchy too. The tone used in category A answers is disparaging, homophobic and overly identified with women as well. For example, "You don't leave home without: A.

You haven't left home since your mom confiscated your plastic bubble" and, "Fear Factor ... A. Makes you scream like a little girl and hide behind your quilted pillow" (60). Option C is one higher in the hierarchy, as these answers position the reader who chooses them as a 'nice guys', if not a bit unmanly. He is the friendly guy next door, who isn't really a 'tough guy', but the author likes him none the less. For example, "You don't leave home without: C. Your Manbag" and, "Fear Factor ... was choosing who to support in the 2003 Rugby World Cup final between the Ozzies and the Poms" (60). Next is the Baden Powell 'wannabees' – these men are adventurers. The author positions them respectfully. They are given value within this hierarchy, for example, "You don't leave home without: B. Your multitool and a GPS" and, "Fear Factor ... B. Is what you face every day when you get out of bed" (60). At the top, ironically positioned are those readers who choose option D, the option littered with intertextual references to Chuck Norris.

The way that Chuck Norris is ironically engaged with in the quiz shows that mostly C's are more *GQ* readers and D's are used ironically at the 'tough guy's expense. The 'C' response is usually the more realistic option provided. For example,

8. The closest you've come to death was:

A. A freak, septic paper cut you picked up in the office, which was exacerbated by keyboard gunk. You almost lost your space-key digit.

B. While bow hunting a rogue elephant called Smaug in the Gonarezhou National Park, the fletchling on your lucky black arrow fell off mid-flight, forcing you to take refuge with an amorous honey badger called Bilbo.

C. This one time, at band camp, you ran out of toilet paper and you had to use a leaf. It was poison ivy.

D. Kitesurfing in Bali, you had to ride a tsunami to safety.

Answers A, B and D are dramatic and over the top. Answer C uses toilet humour and refers to an embarrassing skin rash, both stereotypically 'male' humour markers. Answer D, which falls into the Chuck Norris category, is the most excessive and perhaps even impossible. The statement, "Kitesurfing in Bali, you had to ride a tsunami to safety" is ironic because it presents extreme masculinity as the dramatic, but realistically impossible. The authorial position on Norris is once again revealed through the presentation of the 'übersexual'.

There are two readers constructed by the Chuck Norris reference. On the one hand, there are those constructed readers who do not pick up on the irony. On the other hand, there are those who are culturally literate. These readers have made the extensive intertextual references and 'get' the ironic play on Chuck Norris the heroic cult anti hero. This intelligent, comedy loving reader is constructed as being equal to the text. The answers establish reader point of view by creating a hierarchy of readers. Each imagined reader is openly evaluated with irony, whereby the truth/value is made public by excessively referring to the opposite.

The irony allows the magazine to produce and assist men in negotiating these stereotypes while at the same time claiming them to be mere fun and games. While encouraged not to take the quiz seriously by its over-the-top humour, the men are still negotiating the different popular masculinities available. The ironic humour allows the reader to comically detach themselves from what would normally be an emotionally trying identity negotiation while still interacting with the text. The humour serves to emotionally detach the process of identity negotiation from the reader. Thus, the quiz is making light of recent ambiguities in masculine identity that could be anxiety provoking, to emotionally estrange the content from itself. This creates a receptive space for the readers to negotiate the content.

4.9 Modality and the construction of irony

The textual modality further contributes to the discursive space constructed with excessive irony. Irony is the expression of truth through the denial of that very truth expression. Modality is the social semiotic approach to the question of truth (Van Leeuwen, 2005). Modality revolves around the crucial issue in communication surrounding the reliability of the message (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996: 159). As the receivers of messages we attach varying degrees of credibility to the different messages we receive on a day to day basis (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996: 159). Our assessment of these messages is based on our readings of modality markers embedded in the text itself which cue our judgment on the reliability of these texts (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996:

159). Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996: 159) argue that these modality cues are established out of "...the interest of social groups who interact within the structures of power that define social life, and also interact across the systems produced by various groups within a society." Modality serves to create an imagined community between the reader and the author (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996: 160).

The visual representations which accompany the "Tough Guys" verbal text combines visual and verbal modality markers. On page 58, Ali is shown in the boxing ring, and the caption which explains the images states, "Ultimate 'tough guy' Muhammed Ali stands over Sonny Liston, Maine USA, 25 May, 1965." The grammar use is objective, which Van Leeuwen (2005: 163) describes as, "...the idea of objective truth is explicitly expressed." The caption is represented as being impersonally and objectively true. The objectivity of the marker is further emphasized by the historical cue, "Maine USA, 25 May, 1965" (58). This is the language of news; this grammar represents information as 'indisputable' facts, which has a high modality in Western society. According to social semioticians, modality is not restricted to verbal text, but extends into the visual realm. This is particularly evident in the current example which is an accompanying caption of a visual text. The photograph represents a historical fight between Muhammed Ali and Sonny Liston. Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996: 165) argue that black and white images have a low modality because it is not naturalistic. However, the image is being represented as an historical artefact, and the black and white colour saturation continues this representation, thus giving the image a high modality as a historical truth. The high modality of the text is further improved by the Ali quote,

I done wrassled with an alligator, I done tussled with a whale, handcuffed lighnin', threw thunder in jail. Only last week I murdered a rock, injured a stone, hospitalised a brick, I'm so mean I make medicine sick (58).

While the quote itself has a low modality given the impossibility of his boasted feats, the fact that it is a famous quote attributed to Ali, boosts the overall modality of the visual – verbal text.

The visual-verbal representation of Ali has a high modality. However, the caption, 'Ultimate tough guy', lowers the modality. The grammar is subjective and excessive,

which act as low modality markers. This is a matter of opinion, and is not a historical fact. Thus, although the historical information is correct, the reality of the image is skewed by making claims in the caption which cannot be backed up. However, the unsubstantiated claim makes the image more compositionally salient and links the image to the text thus reducing the modality of the image through the comic setting.

While, not ironic on its own, the lowered modality of the representation of Ali contributes to the overall visual irony of this article. It is connected visually with the visual-verbal texts on page 59, and provides an essential ingredient for the ironic success of the text. On page 59, there is a 'tough guy' pyramid. The images are still video images of these men in 'action' in their respective celluloid endeavours. Stallone, McQueen and Ford are in naturalistic colour, which, according to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), gives them a higher modality than the image of Norris, which is black and white. However, the black and white rendering of Norris connects the representation to the image of Ali on the facing page. Visually, the written text is linked to the two main images on pages 58 and 59 through colour. Norris and Ali are in black and white, and the text is black. The other men represented are shown in full colour. This creates a metaphorical connection between the written text, which is talking about 'übersexuals' (ultimate 'tough guys') and the images, which, through salience, promote Ali and Norris as being more valuable and important in the context of being 'tough guys'. Ali and Norris's modality is further enhanced by the mythologizing effect of black and white images. Legends such as James Deane and Marilyn Monroe are often represented in black and white as are heroes such as Malcolm X and John F. Kennedy.

The high modality of the Ali representation is 'lent' to the Norris image, creating visual irony. Ali was the undefeated world boxing champion, and commonly recognised by Western society as an undisputedly 'tough guy'. Norris is a television and movie actor who is well known for his stereotyped characters. The ironic construction of Norris as the ultimate tough guy is visually reliant on the high modality awarded to Ali. The composition of visual irony in this text exploits modality. Modality analyses the

reliability of messages and this text manipulates the high modality of one text by attaching it to a text of a far lower modality, creating irony.

4.10 Final Comments

The article is using what Jackson et al. (2001) call excessive irony to separate the readers from what could quite easily be seen as a crisis. The 'other' men used in the article, such as Muhammed Ali and Harrison Ford have genuine and respected 'tough guy' images, whereas Chuck Norris is a cult anti-hero hero. This device goes beyond irony into an excessively ironic space pointing to the impossibility of such extreme masculinity. This idea works within the acknowledgment that the magazine is in fact more 'metrosexual' in its orientation. It also expresses an excessive irony towards the constantly changing trends in masculinity, for example, "An übersexual is supposed to be a hybrid of the Neanderthal man and the 'metrosexual', and comes from the same little lady that coined that term for a straight man who has all the characteristics of a gay – metrosexual" (59). *GQ* magazine uses irony to create a safe environment, which is distance enough away from the reader to allow him sufficient space to negotiate this new identity.

Jackson et al. argue that men's lifestyle magazines use irony as a defence mechanism against external attack, "and internal defence against more ambivalent feelings that render masculine experience less omnipotent and less certain than it is represented here" (2001: 104). The article constantly vilifies non-traditional masculinities while venerating the 'übersexual', which ironically creates a comfortable environment for the readers to negotiate their masculine identities in a fun and non-threatening environment. The irony and casual, equal address combine to ease the possible apprehension felt by *GQ* readers about the multiple masculinities on offer in contemporary society. What is occurring here in *GQ* magazine is two fold. Firstly, the author's use of irony allows the readers to indulge in the fantasy of the 'übersexual' in a relatively comfortable environment. This allows the readers to explore mediated forms of masculinity within the post-feminist age of flux. In this article, *GQ* ironically explores the masculine identity of the

übermasculine, without actually requiring any action on the side of the readers. It allows them to explore this masculine discourse in a detached, comfortable environment.

Secondly, Jackson et al. (2001) argue that this use of irony could be read as a form of cynicism against the institution of magazines themselves. Jackson et al (2001: 105) argue that it is possible that the cynical component of men's lifestyle magazines foster ideological strategies that are not ironic, "the content of magazines could be said to provide ideological reinforcement for ideas concerning men and women being constructed as binary categories, and the promotion of narcissistic illusions within men". What is pertinent then, is the connection between this article's cynicism and its appeal for authentic masculinity. Jackson et al (2001: 105) argue that the discourses of authenticity and cynicism are connected through the belief that 'men are not for changing'. This is particularly evident in this *GQ* article – despite feminism, the gay liberation and other social movements; the author is still seeking the 'authentic real man' somewhere in the fray through a cynical discourse of the unchangeable man. Jackson et al. (2001: 105) argue that the pleasure of reading men's lifestyle magazines then comes from, "...their ability to commodify an unstable dialect that opens out certain questions while closing others down."

What is clear from the article and quiz is that while 'übersexuals' are being given social value as a desirable masculinity, 'metrosexuals' are still the more valuable and economically powerful masculinity in this representation. The value of 'übersexuals' is tempered by the use of irony – the intertextual reference to Chuck Norris is a key indicator of this irony, as it is situated within a wealth of cultural irony and satire of the anti-hero hero. Thus, although the dominant discourse seems, at a first glance to be about 'tough guys' and their power and value, when examined deeper, irony shifts the way this is read, placing the value on 'metrosexuals' and the 'new man'. Aggression and hyper masculinity are dealt with comically, and Chuck Norris is exalted to such an extreme that it becomes humorous. Although trend spotters are saying that the ultra masculine men are back, the 'metrosexual' or 'new man' is in fact the constructed norm from which we can position ironic satire against.

In summary, this chapter has applied the analysis model established in the methodology chapter and then applied each of the three levels of description: representational, interactive and compositional to the *GQ* article “Tough Guys” (2006). The focus of this chapter is irony, and how irony is established through visual and verbal syntactic patterns of ‘statement and negation’, binary opposition and classification hierarchies. *GQ* magazine used the internet cult of Chuck Norris as a comedic reference point to direct their reader’s attention to the multiple masculine identities available to men in contemporary culture. This chapter concludes that *GQ* magazine used discursive irony and extreme masculinity in the shape of the ‘übersexual’ to create an intimate, yet emotionally elusive space where *GQ* readers can navigate the ambiguities of contemporary masculinity.

Chapter 5

FHM

Death of the Berserker

5.1 Introduction

Continuing the previous chapter's critical aim, this chapter analyses the *FHM* article, "Pablo and the Charlie Factory" (2006) in terms of the critical discourse/social semiotics methodology set out earlier. The focus of this chapter is to address how *FHM* represents excessive risk taking behaviour. Death is inevitable and a constant source of anxiety for humanity and by glorifying excessively risky behaviour, this article is displacing the fear of death. This chapter's primary focus is on examining how representational and interactive meanings are constructed through compositional elements. War-like discourse is prevalent throughout the article and it is formed through a narratively composed military intelligence dossier which uses categorisation, binary construction and the assembly of audience-author relations.

5.2 Description of the article

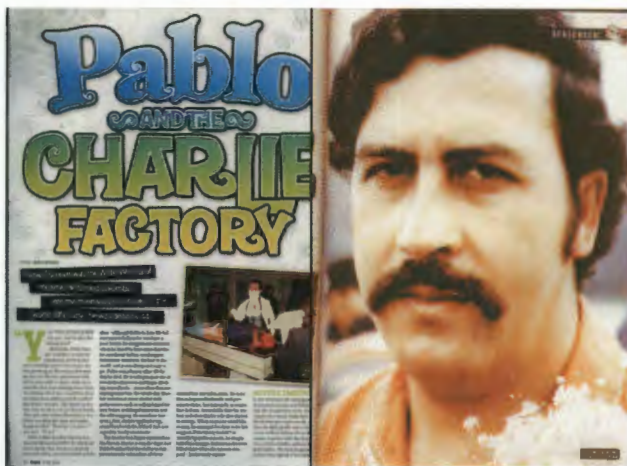


Figure 12. The first two pages of the article.

The article, "Pablo and the Charlie Factory" (*FHM*, 2006) is a six page article. Articles of this length are generally uncommon in the composition of magazines. The magazine pays the journalist by word making this article particularly expensive. The article relies heavily

on visual indicators, with approximately fifty percent of the overall space filled with photographs and other visual elements. The title of the article is printed on page 68 in the same font used by the “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory” movie (see figure 12).



Figure 13. Page 70 and 71 with the coke timeline.

On pages 70 and 71 there is an inserted time line made with white powder on a black background (see figure 13). Throughout the article there are small spots of white powder which represent cocaine in popular culture. On this double page spread, there are three photographs. The black and white image on page

71 is of Pablo Escobar and his family. The large colour image straddling both pages is of an unidentified man standing near a burnt out car. To the left of this image is a photograph of Escobar’s home today.



Figure 14. Page 72 with the military photograph.

Pages 72 and 74 are both single pages. On page 72 there is a large photograph of a military helicopter and three armed soldiers in a field (see figure 14). Underneath the larger image is a smaller ‘wanted’ poster for Escobar and his associate. On page 74 there are three photographs. The largest photograph is of Escobar’s body surrounded by law enforcement officials. The middle image is of five men running on a roof and the smallest bottom image is of Escobar’s grave.

The text follows the life of Pablo Escobar, starting with his death, and then jumping back to his birth following his life back to his death. While this article is displacing the fear of death, it starts with the death of its main protagonist. The first page of article contains only one image: that of the dead, bloody body of Pablo Escobar. The article climaxes at the end with his death in a hail of bullets and once again, the page is dominated by an image of Escobar's dead body. Death seems to permeate this article making it unavoidable. In this article, although Escobar undoubtedly died (we see his grave on page 74) his death is mediated through a sea of unmitigated praise of his life. There is no displacing the historical fact that Pablo Escobar is dead and that he became immortalised by his passing. However, the article focuses on Escobar's high risk 'achievements' during his lifetime his death is given meaning beyond a terminal end. The fear of death is the fear of the loss of meaning. Thus, this article displaces the emotional meaning of Escobar's death by glorifying his risk-lead life and the discourse of war give meaning to Escobar's death.

5.3 War-like Discourse

The discourse used in this article is similar to that used to report war. War-like discourse often has a numerical component. One would assume that focusing on the number of dead and wounded would compound the impact of war on those consuming the media discourse. However, by focusing on numbers, the human impact of a story is diminished. This is because numbers can be impersonal and anonymous, detracting from the real people affected by the war. What this discourse does is detract from the emotional component of violence and death making death more about a high score tally than about people. The article keeps a tally of wounded and dead, awarding 'points' to each side. For example:

Escobar also jump-started a new terror campaign. In the first six months after his escape, a total of 65 Columbian policemen were killed and not a week went by without a car bomb going off somewhere in the country. But when a bomb exploded in January 1993 next to a book shop, killing 21 and wounding 70, among them lots of children, finally someone has had enough. (72)

Here, if you add up the deaths attributed to Escobar, more than a hundred 'points' are placed on Escobar's side of the scoreboard. Points are then awarded to the other side:

Jose Lozano, made the mistake of secretly working for Escobar after his resignation; his body was found riddled with 25 bullets in the streets of Medellin. In the following months, 20 more of Pablo's employees were killed, among them his brother-in-law and his cousin.' (74)

The awarding of points is a common tactic used in war reporting. It is often used to validate war by referring to the number of dead caused by the other side to your soldiers as reason for the number of dead your 'side' has caused. Representing war by numbers represents revenge attacks as necessary.

The headings, which frame each section of the narrative and catch the eye of the reader, use a war-like discourse which serves to further construct this war-like discourse. For example: "hostile takeover", "exposed", "public enemy no.1", "imprisoned...but not really" and "an eye for an eye". The headings are similar to war reporting newspaper headlines. Headlines discursively frame the section of writing that follows. They continue the war-like discourse beyond the accumulation of points, thus even where the text is not necessarily about bodies and violence, the war-like discourse frames the information through the headings. For example:

PUBLIC ENEMY NO 1

Luis Galan, the man who had kicked Escobar out of the New Liberal party, was looking like a dead cert to become the next president of Colombia. He didn't miss a chance to tell his audiences that once in office he would declare war on Pablo Escobar and the Medellin Cartel. So Escobar had him killed too. (71)

While this section of the article is about Escobar's short-lived political career, it continues the war-like discourse. The words, "dead cert", are a popular reduction of 'dead certain', a sure thing. These words are often used in tactical language to refer to an easy shot or military action. These words are followed later by a description of Escobar's political arc nemesis, Luis Galan declaring war on Escobar and his cartel. Escobar replies to Galan's declaration of war by killing him. Thus, the war-like discourse parallels the war against Escobar.

The war-like discourse is further constructed through the visual mode. Photographic images are used to compose a war-like visual profile. The main image, on page 69 is of Escobar. It is a close up shot of his head. He looks directly at the camera. At the bottom of the page, there is white powder, presumably meant to signify cocaine. This frames the image of Escobar in terms of drugs. The image, when read in the war-narrative context discussed above, looks like it forms part of a visual dossier of Escobar, perhaps taken as part of a covert intelligence gathering operation. This assumption is based on two factors. Firstly, as one of the worlds most wanted criminals, it is unlikely that Escobar would have allowed many photographs to be taken of him and secondly, although he is facing the camera, his facial expression is not one of being fully aware that a picture is being taken. Furthermore, the background of the image is blurred, giving the impression that particular care was taken to focus individually on Escobar and not the rest of his companions.

The war-like dossier is continued on page 68, where the written text is accompanied by a grisly, yet scientific image of Escobar on display after his death. In the centre of the photograph we see Escobar's dead body lying on a mortuary trolley, his face covered in blood. The image joins the one on page 69 in the official dossier appearance, as there seems to be an official medical expert performing an examination of the body. The man is standing over Escobar's body, wearing plastic gloves, a mask and a plastic apron protecting his hospital uniform. These images are primarily paradigmatic in nature because of the connection between them and the war-like discourse of the written text. The image is scientific in nature and draws on a vast scientific discourse which uses gloves, masks and protective plastic as key visual indicators. Scientific and military discourses have many commonalities and often work together. Both discourses primarily focus on objectivity, fact based evidence and non emotional interactions. The images are not overtly war-like, but they do work within the war-like narrative being constructed in this text by contributing another aspect to the dramatic construction. They are presented as military intelligence, which is necessary for a military operation.

The verbal narrative is continued visually on pages 70 and 71 through the timeline titled, "The life and times of Pablo Escobar" (70). This section of text is particularly salient because it has a black background as opposed to white, which is used throughout the rest of the text. The timeline is made with white powder signifying cocaine, which continues the visual cocaine theme seen throughout the article. The timeline differs from the text in that it begins with Escobar's birth on 1 December 1949 and ends with his death on 2 December 1993. The timeline provides point form information filling in the informational gaps left in the text. The timeline is thus meant to be read as an informational accompaniment to the text. Timelines are a common military practice and are often used to historically plot wars. They are also often used in high school classrooms to teach World War 2. The timeline categorises Escobar's life into compact moments of criminal mastery. By highlighting Escobar's more criminal endeavours, this timeline categorises Escobar's life into bite size chunks. This action of essentialising is common in military discourse – the rest of Escobar's life is judged non-essential and non-important and is thus discarded. This timeline then enhances and continues the war-like discourse which flows throughout the text.

The war-like discourse is further enhanced by the high modality of the 'dossier' created on Escobar by the text. While modality began as an essentially linguistic analysis tool, it has developed into a useful visual analysis method (Van Leeuwen, 2005: 165). The means of visual representation allow endless opportunities for modality configurations. Van Leeuwen (2005: 166) argues that these configurations act as modality markers, cueing viewer's judgments on the credibility of the text. For instance, cartoons tend to have reduced articulation of background, depth, light, shade and show almost no attempt at articulation of colour and tone. However, these particular variances are given amplification in news photographs. In modern society, cartoons are taken as comic reflections of our society and hence are awarded low modality whereas news photographs are held in high esteem as factual evidence and are regarded as having high modality.

The modality of the visual text is increased by the perception of institutionally organised surveillance. According to Van Leeuwen (2005: 166), degrees of the articulation of

detailed forms are a visual modality marker and can be graded on “a scale which runs from the simplest line drawing to the sharpest and most finely grained photograph.” Military surveillance images amplify the articulation of detail, background, depth, and light and shade. Due to their importance in life and death decisions they are socially awarded even higher modality than news photographs. There is an intrinsic trust in intelligence work, and these images seem more real because they look like ‘evidence’. Many of the images are not identifiable as being directly related to Escobar. For instance, the images on page 70 could very well be random snapshots taken in someone’s backyard. There is nothing in the image to indicate that this home was owned by Escobar. Nor is there any evidence to suggest that the cars once belonged to Escobar either. However, the images are perceived to be as indicated because they are represented as though they were taken out of an evidence file. These modality markers have become well established in the modern era where military intelligence has been used extensively in the media to validate war. These markers have been developed by the modern world as relatively reliable guides to the truth or factuality of military discourse. Their presentation is a visual representation of the general war-like discourse used throughout the article.

5.3.1 The fear of death

What is noticeable is the cheapness of human life, which is quite a common marker in war reporting. War reporting, often inadvertently, is sometimes flippant about death. In the example above, it says, “So Escobar had him killed too.” (71). Prefixing a sentence with the word ‘so’ reduces its formality and gives the sentence a more colloquial tone. Furthermore, by referring to the subject as ‘him’ removes the identity of the victim which reduces the reality of the murder. The death of a prominent politician, a human casualty of war, receives six words of attention. There are multiple examples of this reduction throughout the text, for example, “Three months later Lara was dead.” (70) Again later, “Two months later Restrepo was murdered” (70). These deaths received less than ten words each. Death is a physical experience. This discourse’s nonchalant construction of death emotionally detaches death from the physical reality.

The tragedy of our modern era is that we have no common language to talk about death in a culturally significant way, which results in individuals facing death in social isolation. Death has become something hidden away, and to find it we must look in unlikely places. Death, according to Baudrillard (1991: 185), "is no longer where we think that it is". The fear of death is not about being physically harmed, but as Castoriadis (1997: 136) argues, "that everything, even meaning, will dissolve". Elias (1985) and Giddens (1991) have both argued that death within modernity has been removed from every day life through its confinements in institutions and the more generalised process of individualisation. Elias (1985) calls the loss of community before death, the "loneliness of the dying". Death has become hidden and privatised within modern society. While magazines focusing on male health, such as *Men's Health*, focus on staying the decline of the human body, laddish magazines such as *FHM*, celebrate a culture of disregarding the body by focusing on various kinds of risk taking behaviour (Jackson et al 2001: 101). The apprehension men may feel about their imminent decline resulting eventually in death is overridden in this article with a culture of excessive risk.

The story begins with its end, the death of the main protagonist. For a magazine hypothesized to be displacing death with excessive risk behaviour, opening and ending an article with death is interesting. The opening lines are not what one expects to read in an article about an infamous drug lord, they begin with his death, and not his life. The story begins at the end:

'You fools! This is not my son, you've shot the wrong man!' Hermilda, Pablo Escobar's mother, looked triumphantly at the policemen standing next to the corpse she was pointing at, the corpse that was not her son. But the policemen told her to step aside to make room for a stretcher that was coming down from the rooftop... 'Now he's at peace,' she said. 'At at last' (68)

The narrative of this article, although framed by Pablo Escobar's death, places higher value on his excessively risky life. This makes sense when understood psychoanalytically in terms of the fear of death. If death comes at the beginning, then life must necessarily follow. The article ends with his death, mimicking the life-cycle. While this could be read as fronting death as being more significant, by placing his death in the first and last paragraphs, five whole pages of writing is then allocated to the events leading up to his

death. Death narratively immortalises Pablo Escobar's life because it frames his very existence.

5.3.2 Construction of war-like discourse through Visual and Verbal binaries

Throughout the text there is a binary separation between the 'goodies' and the 'baddies' which feeds into the war-like discourse. Through the article this binary opposition is used to express an underlying glorification of excessively risky behaviour. The general morals of society lead us to assume that Pablo Escobar, the infamous drug lord responsible for hundreds of deaths and massive destruction is the ultimate 'bad guy' of this story. However, the representation of Escobar constantly shifts from being 'good' to 'bad' to 'good'. The representations of his enemies follow the same pattern. Little of Escobar's behaviour is chastised in the text, for example:

Maybe it was the dope, but Pablo Escobar had the ability to stay exceptionally calm when all those around him started to panic. He used this to impress his friends and partners in crime, but especially to inspire fear in them. Around this time his violent and often deadly side also started to emerge. (68).

While a calm and calculating criminal might be terrifying to some, the author crafts this information to read as though these are talents of Escobar that should be admired. Escobar is not described as a criminal, more like a talented leader. The positive categorisation of Escobar continues onto page 70:

But Escobar wanted even more. It wasn't enough for him to be loved by "his people" and to have money than he knew what to with. He wanted even more status, and he wanted to get it by buying a political career. In 1982 he was "elected" to the Colombian congress as an alternate representative for the New Liberal Party. (70)

In the above quote, Escobar is portrayed as having it all – money, the adulation of 'his people' and political power. However, as Escobar began a war against his political enemies, he begins to be categorised negatively:

He bombed a commercial airliner that was supposed to have Gaviria on it. In the end, 110 people were killed in the blast, among them two Americans – but Gaviria was not on board. With this act of terrorism, Pablo became not only a target for the Columbians, but also public enemy number one for the USA. (71).

This act was described as 'terrorism' and Escobar becomes a bad guy.

Escobar's categorisation changes at least twice more before the end of the article. In his last moments, the journalist categorises him as a father and a king. He is killed due to a phone call to his son that lasted too long, referring to an overwhelming fatherly love which left him open to attack. He is finally described, in the last line of the article as "The king of coke" (74). A king is a hero, and while Escobar is the head of a cocaine empire, he is a king never-the-less. This is a positive categorisation, and leaves Escobar as a hero in the minds of the readers. The positive categorisation of an infamous violent drug lord as more of a hero than a bad guy glorifies excessively risky behaviour. By categorising Escobar and his associates as being more 'good' than 'bad', this article is glorifying excessive risk.

The good – bad binary categorisation of the protagonists in the narrative is continued visually through the construction of photographic military intelligence. There are some exceptions, for example on page 70, surrounded by further crime scene photographs and surveillance images, is an image of Escobar's hacienda today. This acts as a connector joining the binaries of past and present together within the narrative. This fronts the present applicability of the past, creating a sense of the timelessness of this story. However, interestingly, the hacienda is shown to be in complete ruin, providing a metaphorical visual representation of the 'bad' state of Escobar's cocaine empire today. This once again plays into the idea of the war against drugs and Escobar. The image, when contrasted with 'good' images of happy times for Escobar and his wife creates a binary division of before (good) and after the war (bad). Visual binaries act as indicators that accompany and reinforce the binaries within the written text.

A similar binary of good and bad occurs on page 74, where we see, flanked on either side by crime scene photos, a current photo of Escobar's grave. In the image, there is a young man placing flowers at his grave, which already has a large bunch of white roses on it. The grave marker is white marble and is reminiscent of the white marble markers used on American military graves. The grave looks like that of a war hero. The white roses are a common signifier of innocence. It creates an interesting parallel between the innocent, good Escobar that his compatriots saw and the bad war criminal seen by his enemies. It

poses a question to the viewer: was Escobar a criminal or a saviour? The binary positioning in this article constructs the reader in this war-like discourse. It provides a story to the visuals in a way that a news reporter would give to photographic images in the news. War-like discourse relies heavily on the binary constructions of good and bad because enemies validate war. Visual binaries are essential because modern war reporting is heavily visual. Essentially, binaries construct the war itself, and are the fundamental foundations of the war-discourse in this article.

5.4 Construction of the relationship between the audience and the author

The construction of the relationship between the writer and the audience is significant because it, in some ways, contradicts the war-like discourse discussed above. The journalist takes the role of news reporter and story expander. Normally, a feature article would either expand on the news that Escobar has been killed or aim to provide a deeper insight into Escobar's life and death. This journalist combines news reporting with other journalistic methods. However, the language use is informal, not the typically formal style of newspaper journalism. This constructs a more informal relationship with the audience. The article uses young, care-free language, with sentences such as "it wasn't enough for him that he was loved by 'his people' and to have more money than he knew what to do with." (65). The language here is relational. It connects with the readers by addressing them in as equals. It does not talk down to them or expect more knowledge of this topic than necessary. The author is speaking to the reader as an equal, as well as a friend.

Although the relationship with the reader is informally constructed, much of the story is written from an 'impartial' war reporter's stand point. This is done through the reporting of newsworthy details such as numbers of casualties, and answering the critical questions: who, when, where, why, what and how. Nonetheless, the story is emotionally sensitive, and gives a face to Escobar beyond his identity as a drug lord by retelling his mother's anguish and his close family ties. The journalist has attempted to use an

impartial tone, using historical facts and numbers to provide a factual basis for the story. However, as discussed above, this article is far from objective and passes judgment over much of Escobar's life. While not negative, the shifting between news journalism and feature journalism, when viewed in light of his concurrently shifting view of Escobar, reveals uneasiness in the war-like discourse. Although Escobar is meant to be a bad drug lord, something about him is heroic and impressive. Heroism is at the very core of war – every war has its heroes and heroic actions are often used to validate war. Heroism makes war worthwhile and the promise of heroism motivates those involved to fight.

This clash of consciousness is reflected in the shifting construction of the relationship between the author and the reader evident in this piece. There is also dialogism within the text between the discourses of war and heroism, which are in conflict at times and reinforcing each other at other times. While significant categorisations occur throughout the text, the construction of the relationship between the author and the audience is ambivalent. It judges Escobar and his enemies to be equally good and bad, and chastises neither for their behaviour. However, the article represents Escobar as heroic, providing a model for masculine behaviour which incorporates excessive risk. By not providing a strong judgment on either Escobar or his enemies, a space is created for discursively negotiating the issue. The author does not provide an answer, allowing the reader to decide what they want about Escobar. The article contributes to the discursive space discussed above which constructs an emotionally safe environment for the readers of *FHM* to work through some of the ambiguities of contemporary masculinity.

Unlike in the *GQ* article analysed in the previous chapter, irony, although generally used in excess in men's magazines, does not feature much in this article. Irony can be used to displace anxiety. However, through the celebration of excessive risk behaviour, the fear of death is displaced by a general ambivalence to the life and/or death of the main characters in the story. The fact that an alternative to irony is being used to create a discursive space to negotiate the ambiguities of the human condition shows that men's lifestyle magazines are relatively dynamic in their use of anxiety busters. They do not merely resort to 'making fun' of serious issues. On many levels, the article encourages

the readers to indulge in voyeurism. The article serves as a voyeuristic window into perhaps the most excessively risky life a person could live. Voyeurism is the enjoyment of, but not necessarily the identification with representations of certain behaviour. Mulvey (2004: 839) defines voyeurism as “pleasure in looking at another person as object ... subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze”. In this article, *FHM* readers are invited into the life and times of the infamous drug-lord, Pablo Escobar. Escobar was the drug-lord often credited as starting the western world’s love affair with cocaine. He declared war on his government more than once and lived and died an extremely wealthy man. These are not the actions of the average *FHM* reader. This article, however, provides the reader with a voyeuristic adventure into the drug underworld without any of its incumbent risks. What this does, is open up a discursive space which allows the readers to voyeuristically experience excessively risky behaviour as a vehicle for the negotiation of their own mortality and any concerns they may have in this regard.

5.5 Heroically cruel: Intertextual references and categorisation

Escobar is discursively immortalised and his death becomes insignificant. The intertextual reference to “Charlie and Chocolate factory” constructs the relation between author and audience. The title, “Pablo and the Charlie Factory”, intertextually links with Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, the Roald Dahl children’s classic which was recently made into a movie by Tim Burton in 2005. The title is written in the same font as the movie’s title, also an obvious intertextual reference to the movie. The movie is about a young boy who wins a tour through the most magnificent chocolate factory in the world, which is owned by an unusual candy maker. The story follows the young boy, who, although he comes from an underprivileged home, inherits the Willy Wonka fortune because he is truly good. The title, “Pablo and the Charlie Factory” has switched around the word ‘Charlie’ within the word order changing the meaning. While ‘Charlie’ is a young boy in the Roald Dahl story, in the title of the article, ‘Charlie’ is also a popular reference to cocaine. The initial translation of “Pablo and the Charlie factory”, when read

in light of its cultural references would be that Escobar was a poor boy who inherited a cocaine kingdom.

The reference might be missed by those not addressed here, and the meaning of the article could be disrupted. Further construction of Escobar as hero occurs in the news-headline type headings used throughout the article. These are designed to read like newspaper headlines – “Pablo’s Hacienda had six pools, lakes, lions and zebras”, “Escobar bombed an airliner and killed 110 people”, “two disloyal inmates were hung up and set on fire”, “it was that phone call to his son that would prove fatal”. This news focus works within the war-like discourse already used throughout the piece. The use of colour highlighting of the headlines ties them to the “Charlie and the chocolate factory” intertextual reference.

The writer reaffirms his presentation of Escobar as impressively heroic and cruel through this intertextual reference. This ‘Willy Wonka’ intertextual reference mimics the war-like discourses of heroes and cruelty. ‘Willy Wonka’ gives Charlie the world by making him heir to the Chocolate factory. In many ways, the author’s construction mirrors Charlie. For example,

The locals loved Escobar. He gave them jobs and a good salary. One of the neighbourhoods in Medellin became known as Barrio Pablo (Pablo town) and residents would invite him to cut ribbons and kiss babies. He was the towns hero, the man who had put Medellin on the map.

Here, Escobar is constructed as a hero who was trying to help his people. He made their lives better. However, while ‘Willy Wonka’ is portrayed as a hero, he is also cruel and heartless at times. The construction of Escobar mimics this duality. The subtitle reveals the crueller reference in this intertext: “Pablo Escobar was the Willie Wonka of Cocaine. He turned Colombia into the main supplier of coke to the world. Of course, he was dead by 44.” Cultural knowledge of the “Charlie and Chocolate Factory” reveals to us that Willie Wonka was the lonely, mentally unstable and cruel owner of the world’s largest chocolate factory who really only wanted to be loved. When this cultural information is then woven into our interpretation of the text, it infers that Pablo Escobar was the unusual owner of the world’s most magnificent cocaine factory and that the readers are the boys

who have won a tour through his life and times. The tone taken in the subtitle is reminiscent of the slightly mad Willie Wonka who turned a young girl into a giant sweet. This intertextual reference reinforces the discursive dismissal of death. Willie Wonka's madness was glorified and enjoyed in the story, as is Escobar's in this article.

The feature is labelled in the magazine as 'Berserker!' which is a play on the words bazooka and berserk – framing Escobar as both the biggest gun and the craziest person. This larger frame works in conjunction with the intertextual frame of "Charlie and the chocolate factory" which further frames Escobar as being a legendary madman. By interweaving this intertextual reference with the overall frame, Escobar is immortalised by this story as a hero. The 'Berserker' hero frame connects the "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" intertextual reference to the rest of the text, continuing the understanding of Escobar as a cruel hero. Through immortalising the excessively risky life and times of Pablo Escobar, this article is shifting the focus away from his death at 44, and onto his life as the most notorious crime boss who ever lived.

5.6 Summary

This chapter has analysed *FHM's*, "Pablo and the Charlie Factory" (2006) according to a critical discourse/social semiotic model. Based in linguistics, this analysis critiqued "Pablo and the Charlie Factory" (2006) through deconstructing the war-like discourse. By looking at the war-like discourse, visual verbal binaries and the construction of the audience author relationship, it has become clear that in "Pablo and the Charlie Factory" (2006), *FHM* was attempting to deal with Pablo Escobar's death in a meaningful manner. Essentially, this article chose to circumnavigate the reality of death, by celebrating the life of Escobar. By giving meaning to his life, this article comforts the *FHM* reader about intimate identity issues surrounding the very real human condition of death while at the same time displacing the original apprehension about the end of meaning with the celebration of excessive risk.

Chapter 6

Men's Health Magazine

Muscle metaphors and ideological struggles in crisis discourses

6.1 Introduction

What is becoming clear in the analysis thus far is that while certain features of masculinity are open to criticism within men's lifestyle magazines, others continue to be invisible. This is no different in *Men's Health Magazine*, which rather than examine and question men's disposition towards work, turns to managing the body in a new-fangled form of compulsion and regulation, while simultaneously sustaining the fantasy of having it all. 'Fantasy' is an imagined space through which the readers of *Men's Health Magazine* can project and examine themselves (Elliott, 1996). Jackson et al state:

What is important in this respect is the specific shape that this fantasy takes, given the restructuring of the workplace and the new sets of social relations with women it has also helped bring onto the agenda. That is, the idea of 'having it all' takes a particular form and has a specific resonance for professional men at this point within the history of modernity (2001: 93).

This chapter explores the notion of the body as a machine to be disciplined as a manner of interconnecting the body and society.

This chapter undertakes to identify and analyse the discourses used in the *Men's Health* article, "Cuban Muscle Crisis" (2006), by applying the critical discourse/social semiotics analysis model. Through this analysis, this chapter aims to further our understanding of the use of the metaphor in the discourses of contemporary South African men's lifestyle magazines. Metaphors are a figure of speech in which a word is transferred to an object different from but analogous to that which it is literally applicable. There are three dominant discourses evident in this article, "Cuban Muscle Crisis", one being 'body as machine' and the others, 'Capitalism' and 'Communism'. While the metaphoric

discourse of 'body as machine' is more dominant throughout the article, there is a strong discursive rift between Communist and Capitalist discourses. Based in linguistics, the model locates and analyses this discursive fissure on three levels, representational, interactive and compositional. Representational patterns, modality, composition and authorial space realise the metaphoric and discursive struggles in the article.

6.2 Description of the article



Figure 15. Pages 142 and 143.

the following caption is underlined, "We can work it out: 10km east of Havana, in Cojimar, men exercise in a gym created in defiance of Communist thinking" (142). The title and sub heading of the article appear on the opposite page,

Cuban Muscle Crisis

With limited food, funds and resources, and a government that looks upon their sport with disdain, Cuba's maverick body-builders have to work harder than most for their physiques. Meet Cojimar's outlaw muscle men. (143)

At the top of each page is, 'Muscle Against the Odds' and the tab, 'Fitness'.

On a denotative level, the article, "Cuban Muscle Crisis" (2006) is a six page feature. It is a highly visual article with eight photographs dominating the text area. The first image, of a muscle builder doing pull ups on metal bars in front of a block of flats, dominates the entire first double page spread (see figure 15). In the top left hand corner,



Figure 16. Pages 144 and 145.

On the next four pages there is a mix of full colour and black and white photographs. They are interwoven with the verbal text. On pages 144 and 145, there are four photographs and one column of writing (see figure 16). Stretching over pages 144 and 145 is a colour photograph of Cuban bodybuilding champion Sergio Jose Antonio, flexing his muscles in a typical body building clench, in front of an old car, in the street. There is another image of Sergio on page 145. Sergio is flexing his muscles in another common body building position, in front of a bicycle, outside a block of flats. There are two images on page 145 of men working out on gym machines, one in black and white (bottom right corner) and one larger on in full colour in the top right.



Figure 17. Pages 146 and 147.

On pages 146 and 147, there is more written text than photographs (see figure 17). There are three photographs on this spread, one of which is in full colour and the other two are in black and white. Stretching over pages 146 and 147 is a black and white photograph of a man welding metal. The caption on this image explains its significance, "Iron man: gym owner Angel is a welder by trade – a useful skill when it comes to constructing new gym equipment". The final two images on page 147 are of men lifting weights. The photograph in the top right corner is in black and white, showing two men lifting hand held weights indoors. The second image, in the bottom right corner is of a man lifting a weight bar outside.

6.3 The construction of body as machine

As discussed in the literature review, the body has become one of the central topics for debate within gender theory. Turner (1991) argues that the refocusing of academic attention upon the body has mainly been spurred on by the emergence of consumer society and changing gender relations. The body has become both hedonistic and disciplined. The body is a continuous project which is constructed through lifestyle choices (Jackson et. al. 2001: 91). How we choose to design and control our bodies becomes increasingly open to personal interpretation, leading the body to be read as an expression of individual identity (Schilling, 1993). Harvey (1998) argues that the body has a certain historic and geographic flexibility to it – the consumerist body is viewed by its owner as controllable. Falk (1996) argues that it only makes sense to link health with longevity if we connect it with the modern notion of the body as an ongoing project. Health then becomes linked to the idea of an ‘open future’ and an ability to defy death.

In previous chapters it has been suggested that *FHM* utilises a focus on excessive risk and voyeuristic ambivalence to construct a discursive space to negotiate the ambiguities of contemporary masculinity while *GQ* uses irony to the same end. This article uses less of these mechanisms to create such a space. This text utilises metaphoric body patterning to open up a discursive space. Jackson et al (2001: 91) argue that the reason *Men's Health Magazine* focuses on excessive exercise, vitamins and diet is that it is a way of dealing with the uncertainty of the future of the body. Jackson et al (2001: 91) argue that, “The culture of the health magazines can be seen as a form of magical thinking that involves a narcissistic fight for life against a time-related future”. Falk writes also,

The mental image of the individual life in the form of a graph does not have the form of a cycle or parable intertwined with the ones to come. Rather it is conceived of as a line, first ascending (growth) and then continuing horizontally towards an end point out of sight (embalming). The Narcissistic ‘fight for life’ is not a confrontation with the actual threats here and now but rather a fight against time related to the future per se as a threat. (1996: 193).

Thus through focusing on the perfecting of the human body, *Men's Health Magazine* is creating distance from concerns surrounding the demise of the body and the inability to 'have it all'.

The 'body as machine' metaphor is constructed narratively through the mirroring of the constructions around the machines and muscles. The machines are described as being built out of recycled materials salvaged from scrap heap, "Metal is welded in odd places, the machine cables are coated with thick layers of grease and the weights are lumpy and rust-disfigured under layers of treacly black paint" (144). In another example, the machines are described as,

Almost every machine has been salvaged from a rubbish dump. The pec dec is constructed from steel pillars and electrical cable. The chin up bar is made from security railings and the footplate of the leg press and hack-squat machine looks like the floor of a truck. The rowing machine has evidently been fashioned from the shell of a bus (144).

Later, the gym itself is described as, "hidden from the sun under an asbestos roof, machines are bolted to the dusty floor" (144). In the last example, even the physical space that the machines inhabit is 'make do' and the overall narrative surrounding the machines is one of triumph.

The men's bodies are narratively constructed in a similar way to the machines, focusing on the obstacle faced by them in their quest for bodily perfection. The body-builder's bodies are described as follows, "'Look,' explains Roberto, 'I only have money to buy food for a certain amount of repetitions. I can't work my legs. And I need new shoes,' he says, pointing to his Adidas trainers on his feet held together with tape." (146). There is another example on page 146, a story is regaled by Sergio, who saved up to buy fish to eat the day before the Havana bodybuilding championships, but then gave it to his sick daughter, going without protein. The narrative of the machines and the body builders mimic each other. The bodies and the machines follow the same pattern of 'making do' which constructs the ongoing link between these two elements.

The 'body as machine' metaphor is further constructed through the narrative 'tale' of the escapades undergone by the body builders to build their gym. The story is set out in a

step by step patterning. Step one, “They had to win the approval of the Communist committee that runs their housing estate” (146). Step two, “they were given a patch of waste ground between buildings and they began to scrimp, save, beg and borrow to get what they needed.” (146). Step three, “They built it brick for brick” (146). Step four, they open the gym. There is then a major challenge to the success of the narrative, “A few days after we speak, however, a huge blow is dealt: Angel has been forced to close down the gym because a Communist Party member took exception to the Thomas Jefferson quote on the wall.” (147). The situation is resolved through the quick thinking of a main protagonist, “just another couple of days later, the offending quote has been neatly painted over and the gym is back in business” (147). This narrative follows a very common triumph over adversity narrative patterning often seen in knight’s tales and fairytales. As established above, the overall narrative is one of triumph in adversity, and the mechanic and bodily narratives work simultaneously within this patterning. There is a palpable connection between body and machine constructed by the interviewee on page 144, “In everything from food to the machines, here in Cuba we have to make do if we want to work out”. A connection is made between scrounging for food to nourish the body and scrounging for mechanical parts to build and replenish the machines. The notion of self- sufficiency and independence displace the need for human intimacy that men’s magazines seem to find quite difficult to articulate is realised through the metaphoric link between the body and machine.

6.3.1 Bodily mechanics, the other and construction of the Subject - Author – Reader Relationship

The ‘Body as Machine’ metaphor is evident throughout the text. Metaphors, by their very nature construct the reader. Metaphors require the reader to actively engage with the text to exist. Lexis-based metaphoric connections cannot exist without the existence of a constructed author-reader relationship.

The reader and author are constructed as being the same. The reader is immediately constructed with the opening of the text through the direct address of the interviewed subject,

“This body,” spits the bronzed, hulking figure standing over me, “has not been made with steroids or protein drinks.” He angrily flexes the huge muscles in his arms and shoulders and surveys his puffed-out chest with pride. “You people use drugs to get this,” he snarls through the wet heat. “You cheat” (144) (Quote 1 A)

The address is direct, and although it was initially directed at the author, the way the reported speech has been constructed places the reader into the author’s position to receive the direct address. The repeated use of the second person “You”, combined with the choice of lexis used to describe the subject, such “spits”, “angrily”, “puffed-out” and “snarled”, created a hierarchical relationship between subject and reader/author. The reader and author are conflated by the speaking subject into one group, “You”. The reader/author group is equally and simultaneously snarled at by the subject who constructs himself as being positioned hierarchically above the reader and author. This hierarchical relationship separates the subject and reader, which allows for a complex system of othering to occur.



Figure 18. Gym owner Angel in his gym.

The ‘otherness’ of the Cuban body builders is constructed through visual signifiers of ‘otherness’. Identification with the subjects of the photographs is discouraged. Many of the photographic subjects are anonymous. For example, the main, double page photograph on pages 142 and 143, is of an unnamed Cuban body builder. Names are specific and connect the reader to the subject through individuation. A name gives a

human an identity as a person. Without a name, the men become just bodies. The anonymity of the bodies strips them of their humanity and individual identity. The bodies which remain become fused with the gym machines which surround them. In every image we see a body builder and some sort of machinery. On pages 142 – 143 we see a man on pull up bars. On pages 144-145, we see a man flexing next to a car, two different men working on a gym machine and a man flexing in front of scrap metal. Pages 146 and 147 we see more images of muscles with machines (see figure 18, for example). This visually constructs the men as being part of the machines, visually constructing the metaphor of body as machine



Figure 19. Close up of bodybuilders side-turned head.

The identities of the Cuban bodybuilders are further withheld through the positioning of their bodies and particularly their faces. In the main image on pages 142 – 143, the man's face is turned away and obscured by shadow (see figure 19). The human face is a combination of individualised characteristics which make a person unique and identifiable. The bodybuilder is being constructed as anonymous and distant. Similarly, various body builders are shown on pages 144, 145, 146 and 147, but only three men are named, see figure 1 below for example. Anonymity discourages identification and constructs the subject as being separate from identifiable humanity and as being a member of the unknown other.

Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) argue that modality creates an imagined community between the reader and the author. There is a strong sense of separateness constructed through a high modality both visually and verbally between the author/reader and the subject. Modality revolves around the reliability of the message (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996: 159). One's judgement of the credibility of these messages is based on readings of modality markers embedded in the text itself (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996: 159). The verbal text has a relatively high modality because much of the text is constructed out of direct speech, which is culturally regarded as being a reliable report of

events. The text is also written authoritatively, allowing no margin for doubt. For example, “‘You people use drugs to get this,’ he snarls through the wet heat.” (144). This example is authoritative because it allows for no doubt in what is being stated as fact. Furthermore as can be seen in the previous example, this direct speech is presented in the present tense, giving the text immediacy and the pretence of higher reliability.



Figure 20. Example of a black and white image from the text.

The text has high visual and verbal modality. Many of the images are in black and white (see figure 20, for example). Black and white photography adds historical value to the images in the same way as the use of black and white historical images in the *GQ* article. Cuba is often represented as being ‘old fashioned’ and from a bygone era in the text.

For example on page 144, Jose Antonia is photographed in front of an old car. The grainy black and white images look like they were captured in another era which reinforces the high modality of the textual representations of Cuba.

The high modality of the black and white photographs ‘others’ the men in the images. This creates a space between the reader, the author and the subjects. The subjects are constructed as other within a national Cuban stereotype of living in a shabby bygone era outside the modern western world. The hierarchical construction of the subject – reader/author relationship constructs discursive connections between the author and reader. In the previous chapters dealing with *FHM* and *GQ* magazines, I argued that, there is a strict separation between author and reader which, although equal in standing, creates a discursive divide within the text. In this case, however, the reader and author are addressed as equals by the represented subject. In terms of the discursive space created by the ‘body as machine’ metaphor, the space becomes that which exists between the author/reader and subject. The subject is dictating his otherness by constructing his own membership of the Cuban stereotype. In this process, the subject constructs an ‘us’ versus

‘them’ scenario. The subject presumes the existence of a discursive rift between the constructed other and the authorial reader self. This discursive space creates separateness within the narcissistic fight for life over the unstoppable decay of the body. It is within this separateness that the ambiguities of identity can manifest.

6.4 Communism vs. Capitalism: binaries and the realisation of subject as other

While the ‘body as machine’ metaphor is intertwined throughout the text, two other discourses have a strong presence in this piece. The discourses of Capitalism and Communism are both evident. The discursive construction and struggle between these two discourses further realises the subject as other. As discussed above, Turner (1991) argues that renewed interest in the body is symptomatic of the emergence of consumer society. Capitalism is no longer reliant on the denial of physical pleasure through the maintenance of rigorously disciplined forms of manual labour (Jackson et al. 2005: 91). The economic system has moved into a more hedonistic space where the body has become the vehicle for pleasure (Jackson et al. 2005: 91). Pleasure is fuel of Consumer society, the lovechild of Capitalism. While on the surface the discourse of ‘body as machine’ looks to be completely separate to any Capitalist discourses, the bodily discourse is intrinsic to Capitalist discourses of consumerism.

The title refers to a political crisis between Communist Russia and Capitalist United States which occurred forty years ago. The Cuban Missile Crisis was a tense moment in world history which may have lead to the nuclear decimation of the United States of America. Briefly, the Cuban Missile Crisis was an international nuclear stand-down involving the United States and the Soviet Union. The US learned that the Soviets were installing missiles with the capacity of shooting nuclear warheads onto US soil. The American blockaded Cuba and the Soviets eventually backed down. The use of the words “Cuban” and “Crisis” intertextually frame Communism negatively as being the source of the crisis. Historical and cultural awareness is needed by the *Men’s Health* readers to

decipher this intertextual reference completely, but very little specific knowledge is needed to translate this reference to mean Communism is bad.

The overt suggestion that Communism is negative made in the title is met with immediate opposition by the subject in the opening lines. The speaking subject actively states membership to the Communist Cuban group of 'others'. This overt self-othering creates a binary separation between Capitalism and Communism. Conceptually, binary separation occurs throughout the article between Capitalist and Communist ideologies and discourses with Capitalism valorised over the other. This categorisation is done, at the very beginning of the article, by the interviewee in quote 1 A. The immediate explanatory reading of this example is that the aggression evident in the text is caused by an ideological clash between Communism and Capitalism. Both economic regimes believe the other to be intrinsically wrong and damaging to the citizens who live within them. While it is *easy* to read this as a simple Communism versus Capitalism ideological debate, there is an immediate division between us and them by the speaking subject who addresses the reader-other as "you" and "cheaters" (144). This is the more significant categorisation made throughout this article, continuing until the last lines. The division between us and them is interesting, because it encourages the reader to other the Cubans. Othering the subject separates the readers from the subjects of the article, making their differences more apparent.

This article is written from a Capitalist point of view which further others the Communist Cubans. This is made clear in the opening paragraph where the author writes, "His frustration stems from the fact that he (mistakenly) regards all bodybuilders in places like the US and UK, cultures which I represent, as solely pumped up on steroids – definitely not available in Cuba." (144). Although the article commonly uses direct quotes from the Cuban bodybuilders and aims to give the readers a glimpse in the struggle for this sport in a Communist country, the authorial presence is strong. Again, later on in the article, the author actively asserts his presence within the narrative action, projecting his personal point of view onto the story,

When I visit, the gym has been open for just a few weeks. They've painted murals on the walls of Ernest Hemingway and righteous quotes from Fidel Castro, Cuban author Jose Marti and third US President Thomas Jefferson, all in maroon, lapidary copperplate. (146).

Here we see what the journalist is seeing, through his eyes. This is because he actively acknowledges his presence in the description – he was there and describes to the readers what he sees as a Capitalist. Authorial Capitalism is clear from the way he describes quotes of Fidel Castro, the leader of Communist Cuba, as righteous. While righteous can mean virtuous, it is commonly used with negative connotations of egotism. Ernest Hemingway and Thomas Jefferson are popular figures in the Capitalist world and their representations are neutral. Thus authorial Capitalism is established.

The reader and author are connected once again by the construction of the Capitalist – Communist binary. The author and reader are addressed as being part of the same group by the 'Communist' body builder in quote 1 A. The 'you' referred to in the text addresses both the author and the reader. In other place, the author positions himself as part of the 'Communist' subject using the word 'we'. For example, "We are standing in the Ernest Hemingway Community Gym in the village of Cojimar, 10km's east of Havana." (144). There is a subtle difference in these two oppositional groupings. The author is pairing himself with the 'Communist' other, whereas the 'Communist' subject is pairing the author with his 'Capitalist' readers. Because the author is not Cuban, which is obvious from the way the Cuban subjects address him, in terms of the Communist-Capitalist binary, the Capitalist author is paired with the reader against the Communist other.

The ongoing narrative of the underdogs triumphing against adversity is significant in terms of the binary construction of Communism versus Capitalism. Narratively, the underdogs are the body builders who are unwelcome in their community because body building glorifies the individual whereas Communism is about the good of everyone in society. Individualism is a keystone of Capitalism and the immediate assumption, one that is certainly held by the author, is that Communism is negative and that these men are rebelling against it. This is clear from the subtitle of the article,

With limited food, funds and a government that looks upon their sport with disdain, Cuba's maverick bodybuilders have to work harder than most for their physiques. Meet Cojimar's outlaw muscle men.

The word 'maverick' has the connotation that the bodybuilders are outlaws who are rebelling against their restrictive government, which is the source of the bodybuilder's hardship. As described above, the bodybuilder's trials are narratively patterned into a progression out of which they ultimately triumph over the dictatorial Communist government.

The above narrative is however the authorial Capitalist narrative. The narrative provided by the interviewees and their high modality reported speech provides an entirely different story, reinforcing the binary separation constructed between Capitalism and Communism. In the opening paragraph, the interviewed subject makes his negativity towards the Capitalist west obvious in quote 1 A. The west is defined negatively as cheating on their bodies – referring to a life of laziness and cheating often associated with the Capitalist west by Communism. There is pride evident in the tone taken by the interviewee, which shows that despite the author's best efforts to make the readers feel apologetic for the Communist body builders, they are actually proud of their achievements.



Figure 21. Main image on page 142.

Visually, the authorial narrative is given preference. The images have jagged, scissor cut edges, and words pasted over them. The images follow a narrative pattern similar to comic books, with short narrative indicators on each image. For example, the main image on page 142 of a man doing pull ups in a housing estate (see figure 21). The text reads, "We can work it out: 10km east of Havana, in Cojimar, men exercise in a gym created in defiance of Communist thinking". The aged, scrapbook, home-made feel furthers both the discourses of 'body as machine' and downtrodden Communism by furthering the 'make-do' authorial attitude associated with Cuba throughout the text. This attitude is

continued visually throughout the text. At first it seems that the images support the story, acting as visual aids to the interviews, however, this is not the case. The visuals and their

explanatory texts are merely aiding the journalist's story by continuing the make-do framing of Cuba, not the interviewee's story. Thus the visuals and their composition are actually giving more weight to the authorial interpretation of the text.

The authorial version is given further preference through more salient headlines and quotes. For example, the subtitle of the article frames the entire text within the authorial point of view. However, when one carefully reads the verbal text, two things become obvious. Firstly, there seems to be a decent sized body building fraternity in Cuba, given it has competed internationally before and there are references to a gym in Havana. Secondly, if this sport was outlawed or disapproved of by the Communist government, they would probably have shut it down. As it is, the only problem the party had was with a simple quote on the wall of the new gym. Not the gym itself. Thus, the statements given particular salience are not actually accurately depicting the issue. The effect of fronting the authorial Capitalist version is that the Communist interpretation of the text falls away and becomes the other.

6.5 Pride and Sympathy: secondary binaries of economic discourses

A secondary binary between pride and sympathy accompanies that of the Communism vs. Capitalism debate. Sympathy manifests in unequal relationships between subject and object where the subject is encouraged to feel 'sorry' for the object. This discussion between pride and sympathy is evident throughout the text. The machines used by the body builders are described by the author as, "salvaged from rubbish" whereas the interviewees describe the situation as, "here in Cuba we have to make do if we want to work out" (144). The first and second statements say the same thing in different ways. The second statement reveals pride in their ability to survive and the first, derogatory and sympathetic to the terrible state of the machines.

The pride and sympathy binary is evident in the authorial interpretation of the narrative. The author sympathetically describes the body builder's troubles as follows: "in a country

where body-building is looked upon as a decadent sport glorifying the individual as opposed to society as a whole, there were many obstacles" (146). This is the authorial version of events, one that is crafted to draw an affinity between the reader and the bodybuilders. The readers are assumed to feel positively about the glorification of the individual through the sport of bodybuilding, which constructs a correspondence between the reader and the subject as they are affected by the same negative influence. Sympathy is then a foundational element of the authorial narrative.

The narrative of the subjects is entirely different. They refuse the construction of sympathy opting rather to be proud of their achievements. There is a deep sense of pride in the way the bodybuilders describe their sport and their gym. The story opens with a proud proclamation in quote 1A of the speaking subjects pride in the way he has built his muscles without western steroids or protein drinks. In another example, "I looked at pictures from US bodybuilding magazines and engineered everything from those," he explains, as he proudly gives me a tour of the gym." (146). At the end of the story, Sergio is quoted as saying, "We may not have much, but we have a heart and we have courage" (147). These quotes reveal that although by US and UK standards, the Cuban bodybuilders may have it hard, the bodybuilders are proud of their achievements and their narrative is one of pride.

Capitalist sympathy for the plight of these 'poor' Communists is encouraged through this point of view. Communism is blamed throughout this article as being the source of these bodybuilders plight. For example,

A few days after we speak, however, a huge blow is dealt: Angel has been forced to close the gym down because a Communist Party member took offence to the Thomas Jefferson quote on the wall. Roberto is visibly upset. Entrance to the gym has to be suspended until further notice. A little later, I pay another visit and Roberto outside, dejectedly kicking loose stones across the ground. "Angel is smoking cigarettes all the time and can't sleep," he says. "We don't know what will happen." (147)

This is an overly dramatic construction of events, making it seem like the Communist government is shutting down bodybuilding and crushing these men's spirits. The solution is simple, and the drama is easily dissolved, as is the case in this article,

Fortunately, just another couple of days later, the offending quote is neatly painted over and the gym is back in business. When we speak again it's clear Sergio couldn't be happier. (147)

This however, is downplayed by an end line quote made by the interviewee, Sergio, about the courage the Cuban bodybuilders have. The journalist uses his point of view as a Capitalist, and the presumed Capitalism of the audiences to draw sympathy for the Communist bodybuilder victims, thus interactively connecting the readers with the participants in the text and the text itself.



Figure 22. A Cuban bodybuilder flexing his muscles.

The visual text further contributes to the secondary binary construction of sympathy and pride. Visually, the images of the Cuban bodybuilders are never clear enough to easily make personal identification with them, and where their faces are visible, they are looking away (see figure 22). The images are of the Cuban body builders either working out or flexing their muscles. The verbal text has already revealed the deep sense of pride that these men feel for their gym and their bodies. The effect of this composition on sympathy is

two fold. Firstly, it continues the categorical separation between the reader/author and subject other. Secondly, the identities of the subjects is neutralised and the reader cannot identify a common bond of humanity. If such existed, the reader would be able to negotiate the constructed, abstract differentiation made between Communist and Capitalist. Sympathy is more difficult when commonality is available because sympathy requires an unequally yoked relationship between subject and object. If the subject becomes the same rather than other, sympathy falls away making space for empathy.

6.6 Final Comments: Communist mechanics or Capitalist machines?

From the very beginning of time, the human body has been the focus of human existence. Connell (1995, 2003) argues that bodies are a point of reference. Gill (2001), argues that male bodies have become the object of 'the gaze' of masculinity and that this has led to a great anxiety in men about their appearance and performance as men. Here, *Men's Health Magazine* is presenting an idealised form of masculinity, drawing on a specific set of social anxieties and fantasies. The article positions itself within a variety of discourses and social practices that connect body and society. In this particular article, the notion of the body as a machine to be disciplined is explored. The representation of these body builders as heroes is gendered and instrumental. There is a metaphorical relationship created between the Cuban bodybuilder's hand made recycled gym machines and their all natural, scrapped together bodies. This metaphorical relationship established the men's relationship with their bodies is purely instrumental.

In modern times we have seen an even larger focus being put on the male body as being a machine to be pushed to the very limits. While this article fronts itself as being about hero body builders fighting their Communist oppressors for the right to their sport, when one strips away the deceiving Capitalist discourse of individuality, one is left with a metaphorical discourse of 'body as machine' which reveals a deep unease with the body. The focus on the body as instrumental avoids emotional issues, providing a fantastical getaway for men from emotional issues that the post feminist world encourages them to embrace. However, unlike lad magazines use of irony, which enables men a comfortable space to negotiate new modes of masculinity, the masculine discourse of body as machine replaces emotional concerns with bodily pain and accomplishment in gym.

Within modern culture, men's relationship with their bodies is often represented as being entirely active. Feminist academics working within psychoanalytics such as Chodorow (1978) and Benjamin (1990) argue that this can be connected to the maintenance of

gender polarities, driven by an unconscious fear of the feminine held by men. Similarly, Seidler argues that:

Within modernity we have learnt to treat the body as machine that functions according to its own laws and principles. We learn to treat it something like a car. If it breaks down it needs to be taken to the garage. Similarly it is doctors who have professional knowledge about male bodies. This sustains an external relationship with our bodies that allows us to continue using our bodies as instruments for proving ourselves as men. (Seidler, 1997: 186).

Jackson et al (2001) argue that one of the reasons for the popularity of *Men's Health* is that men find it difficult to discuss bodily matters with other men. Tracey (1997: 197) argues that in this culture of silence, masculinity "strives to overcome the feminine in inner and outer worlds". When looked at in this way, the body becomes the last frontier between social and unconscious spaces. The tough, well honed body is used to preoccupy the mind in avoidance of the more feminine need for love and affection (Jackson et al. 2001). Jackson et al (2001: 99) argue,

[S]uch representations and feelings are interpreted as failing to embody thrusting forms of heterosexual masculinity. To instrumentalise the body is to deaden the self in terms of the more reciprocal relations that heterosexual men might form with their unconscious, with women and with men with different sexualities.

Thus a culture which attempts to govern the body serves the currently hegemonic masculinity that seeks to hold back the development of more emotional relationships between self and others and also within the self. This is exactly the same notion as the utilisation of irony in other more laddish men's magazines. It acts as a divider of men and their emotions. However, unlike the use of irony, the focus on and indulgence in bodily anxiety, while distancing in nature, does not really provide a safe environment for discursive exploration of the body, whereas irony provides a comfortable environment for men to examine alternative modes of masculinity.

In summary, this chapter has applied the critical discourse/social semiotic analysis model to the *Men's Health* article, "Cuban Muscle Crisis" (2006). The text was described and analysed on three levels: Representational, Interactive and Compositional. There are two main discourses active in this text. On the one hand there is the discourse of 'body as machine' and on the other hand there is a discursive struggle between Communist and Capitalist discourses. The discourse of 'body as machine' is constructed metaphorically

whereas the discursive struggle between Capitalist and Communist discourses is more overt. The 'body as machine' discourse is constructed through narrative mirror patterning, subject – author construction, modality and otherness. The Capitalist and Communist discourses are constructed mainly through multiple binaries: Capitalism versus Communism; self vs. other and pride vs. sympathy. These multiple discourses create an intimate, yet emotionally elusive space where *Men's Health* readers can navigate the ambiguities of identity sometimes realised as anxiety in contemporary masculinities.

Chapter 7

Blink Magazine

The Black Chameleon

7.1 Introduction

Othering is produced through various mechanisms in the previous three chapters which analyse the use of metaphor, binaries and irony. However, in *Blink Magazine*, race becomes the central reference point and Othering mechanism. Messner argues that, “the only thing that makes ‘men of colour’ a distinct group is the central role they play as racialised ‘other’ in the social construction of ‘white masculinity’ (Messner, 1997: 97). *Blink Magazine* works outside this assumption, positioning blackness as the visible norm without constructing it against whiteness. The end of Apartheid in 1990 provided the conditions for the emergence of a black middle class working in state positions as well as in the boardrooms of corporate South Africa (Budlender 1996; Bond 2000; Marais 1998; Michie and Padayachee 1997; Taylor 1997). *Blink Magazine* connects with the men of this emerging black middleclass group and attempts to discursively navigate the accompanying ambiguities of contemporary black masculinity.

This chapter confronts the discourses of masculinity evident in the *Blink Magazine* article “Modern Male Identity” (2006). The previous analysis chapters have focused primarily on how the magazines use various textual mechanisms to create a discursive space within which the reader can work through the ambiguities of contemporary masculinity. *Blink Magazine* does not employ such mechanisms. The pages of *Blink Magazine* are the discursive space of the magazine within which a dialectical synthesis occurs between traditional and modern black masculinity. Dialectical synthesis is the process whereby, “two opposing forces generate conflict or debate which is resolved when the two sides come together in form of synthesis” (O’Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2005: 257). The

analysis model situates and analyses this dialectical synthesis on three levels, representational, interactive and compositional. The *Blink* article, "Modern Male Identity" (2006) is a discursive struggle for the normative existence of a contemporary black South African identity.

7.2 Description of the Article



Figure 23. Page 14, with the title and subtitle.

On a denotative level, the article, "Modern Male Identity" (2006) is a three page feature. Figure 23 shows page 14. The article contains three photographs, one on each page. On the first page, page 14, the heading, sub title, photograph and sub heading take up almost half of the page,

Modern Male Identity
TO BOX OR NOT TO BOX?

In these times when there are a myriad of labels attached to the modern man, we ask how relevant these western tags are to men in the southern most tip of Africa.

At the top of each page is the word, 'conversations'.



Figure 24. Page 15.

On the next two pages there is a mix of text, photographs and advertisements. A yellow line forms part of an advert running through the body of the text from page 14 to the Johnnie Walker 'Keep Walking' advertisement on page 15 (see figure 24). The line is part of the advert and draws ones eyes into the small advert at the bottom of page 15. The advert is a picture of a man wearing a top hat and coat walking along the yellow line with a walking stick. Above and below him is the following text, 'Keep Walking' and 'Johnnie Walker'.



Figure 25. Page 16.

On pages 15 and 16 there are two small head shots of interviewees accompanied by highlighted quotes. On page 15 there is a picture of Paul Mnisi with the following quote, "Metrosexuality will be out way of life. Our kids might even remove their nail varnish just before a rugby match, play their hearts out and do a touch up after the game." (15) (see figure 25). On page 16 there is a picture of Mandla Sibeko with the following quote, "Our kids need to be exposed to as many ways of living as possible and not to be shy to interact with cultures across the globe" (16).

The verbal text takes the form of a panel debate. The 'metrosexual', 'übersexual' and 'retrosexual' are all forms of mediated masculinity gracing the pages of contemporary men's lifestyle magazines across the world. In the *Blink* article, "Modern Male Identity" (14), the editor holds a panel discussion with two successful urban black men as to whether contemporary urban black South Africa men can be 'boxed' into the western terms 'metrosexual', 'übersexual' and 'retrosexual'. The journalist, labelled as *Blink Magazine* asks a question and then each participant answers. For example,

Blink: Do you think there are guys who are slaves to what they to be perceived as?
 PM: People stick to a certain image for the simple economic reason that they need to be recognised by their audience ... You ultimately have to live with yourself.
 MS: I go to certain shops and I choose what I want ... I'll put my own outfit together with or without their help.
 SM: This whole boxing of the modern man is very intriguing ... We all knew those older guys who even if they lived in a little back room at home, he was always clean, immaculately dressed, fresh s-curl, the best cologne and the priciest shoes. (14-15)

In some cases, after each participant has had their say, one or two of the participants responds to the other participant's comments.

7.3 Black as normative

Stam and Spence (1983: 7) argue that a 'structuring absence' occurs when the lack of representation of people of colour defines white people as the natural identity. The basic

premise of whiteness studies is that whiteness is usually normative, non-raced and invisible (Van der Watt, 2005: 120). Historically, in South Africa no race has ever been invisible, because it was the premise of Apartheid (Van der Watt, 2005: 122). Whiteness was the norm under which other racial groups were hierarchically organised. Van der Watt (2005: 122) argues that the persistent challenge to hegemonic whiteness during the anti-apartheid struggle contested the norm of whiteness. When Apartheid was dismantled in the early 1990's, so too was normative whiteness, leaving a vacuum ready to be filled by the black majority. Much academic attention has been paid to black masculinity as being a marginalised discourse (see Wetherell, 1993). However, in post-apartheid South Africa, black masculinity is emerging as the dominant, hegemonic, normative masculinity. This is evident in the *Blink* text where race is fronted and black masculinity secure, normative and bourgeois.

Blink recognises and makes visible the issue of race. This is evident from the first question,

Blink: With the emergence of terms like Metrosexual ala David Beckham or Will Smith who always look like they've been preened and buffed to perfection, is there a need to be classified into a similar mode of identity as a *black* man living in contemporary South Africa? (Own emphasis)

Whiteness studies focus on how whiteness, as the normative race, is invisible. However, as Rian Malan (1990: 52) writes,

[i]ts strange how obsessed we South Africans are with race. To hear me talk you would say that there was no more to life than being white or black and coping with relevant consequences.

Thus, although blackness is fronted and made particularly visible through its pronunciation at the beginning of the text, this is perhaps due to the South African idiosyncrasy of highlighting race as definitive in every context. While there is no evidence that blackness is regarded as negative or marginalised in this text, it is clearly regarded as the norm. Through the process of binaries, the text constructs normative blackness through invisible, marginalised whiteness.

The text makes blackness normative as well as visibly articulate. Robinson (2000) argues that visibility is a way of securing power:

Making the normative visible as a category embodied in gendered and racialised terms can call into question the privileges of unmarkedness; but visibility can also mean a different kind of empowerment, as the history of movements for social equality has taught us. (2000: 2).

The text is emphasizing its blackness as a way of emphasizing and validating emergent black bourgeois power. This representation of blackness as the power holding norm goes against common media representations of black masculinity which often associates black masculinity with Gangster culture, sexism, criminality and violence. Henry (2002: 114) suggests that violent, urban, black gangster masculinity has been made popular in the cultural mainstream mainly through the commodification of hip hop and rap culture. Henry argues that contemporary violent representations of black masculinity may arise out of the need to compensate for black masculine disempowerment:

One way of compensating for a perceived loss of power, potency or manhood is to adopt the 'tough guise': black male identity is increasingly defines within popular culture by rampant materialism physical strength, and the acquisition of respect through violence (Henry, 2002: 116).

Blink's representation of visible blackness as the norm re-empowers blackness and thus articulates black masculinity outside Gangster culture. Representations of blackness no longer need to compensate for black disempowerment through physical force.

Although the text fronts itself to be African and black, the text is written in English, not an African language. Ngugi (1986) argues that language can be used for ethnic power struggles:

Economic and political control can never be complete or effective without mental control ... For colonialism this involved two aspects of the same process: the destruction or the deliberate undervaluing of a people's culture, their art, dances, religions, history, geography, education, orature and literature, and the conscious elevation of the language of the coloniser. The domination of a people's language by the languages of the colonising nations was crucial to the domination of the mental universe of the colonised. (Ngugi, 1986: 16)

In *Blink Magazine*, the text is written in English which distances and others traditional masculinities associated with African languages in favour of a synthesized masculinity which combines western and traditional masculinities. It is synthesized because although the text is written in English, the language of modernity in South Africa, Zulu words and phrases are used in the text when the interviewees refer to traditional activities. For example SM says,

Say for instance, people have a certain perception of me dressing in suits and smart casual attire, and on this particular occasion on the weekend, minding my own business and I turn up at a friend's gathering wearing *ispoti*, it would not be what they expect but could be part of who I am, not who they see me as. (14)

Here SM, is expressing the idea that people's perceptions of who he is, is strongly driven by how he looks to them. He says that people would be surprised to see him in traditional clothing because they assume he is westernised based on the suits he chooses to wear. He however argues that traditional clothing is as much part of him as his business suits. SM and the other discussants switch between Zulu and English fluidly, and this is indicative of the discursive synthesis that is occurring between traditional and modern African masculinity.

The fluid transition between Zulu and English is indicative of the naturalisation of blackness – there are no translations provided for non-black readers. For example,

So when you meet them at family gatherings and you're chilling with your cousin who still lives at the back room *ekasi*, do does he look at you looking all polished and call you things like *lebojwa*? (16)

Another example, "I could wake up on a Saturday morning and decide to get my car washed in Soweto and hook myself up with *chisa nyama* or go to the stadium for a soccer match." (15) The words 'ekasi', 'lebojwa' and 'chisa nyama' are not interpreted. The words are part of a common township slang known as 'tsotsie taal' and they mean the following:

Ekasi – township/location

Ispoti – a particular hat very popular in township culture

Lebojwa – bourgeois

Chisa Nyama - to braai/barbeque

These slang words are inserted into the English language naturally. The readers are expected to understand this and are thus assumed to speak in a similar manner. The insertion of these words takes ownership of the English language by adapting it to the needs of the speakers thus appropriating English as part of this particular mode of blackness. The Zulu words used in the text are italicised, which sets them apart from the English words. The visual nature of the verbal separation of the words constructs the words as 'other' and not just one comfortable flow in a new language. Although

blackness is being positioned as the norm, within this category of blackness traditional language is separated from English, the language of modernity.

7.4 Binaries: Traditional vs. Modern and their dialectical synthesis

The primary dialectical struggle in this text is between the binary oppositions of traditional black masculinities and modern westernised masculinities. The bi-line of the article is as follows, “In these times when there are a myriad labels attached to the modern man, we ask how relevant these western tags are to men in the southern most tip of Africa.” (14) The text is creating a binary between modern, western masculinities and African masculinities through othering western masculinities by questioning their relevance. If western masculinities are possibly not relevant, then the assumed ‘self’ masculinity of this text is the African masculinity to which it is compared.

The ‘Modern-Traditional’ binary categorisation is interesting, because the interviewees vehemently oppose being labelled as either completely modern or completely traditional. The interviewees are adamant however, that African masculinity is not necessarily traditional. The interviewees discourse constantly repeats how they are still traditional African males, but have adapted to the modern world. PM comments,

I can play (DJ) in Cape Town and look different to when I play in Polokwane, for instance. I guess it’s the state of mind I’m in which dictates the way I look. People will always try to box you into a category to alleviate their confusion about you, especially if you’re a public figure. That’s why I’m a black chameleon and forever changing. (14)

Here, PM verbally separates his visually constructed identity according to how *he* feels he should look in traditional (Polokwane) and modern (Cape Town) surroundings. PM confidently negotiates the division between traditional and modern black masculinity by taking ownership of his decision to retain some elements of traditional masculinity. MS reaffirms his straddling of both traditional African masculinity and a more modern, westernised masculinity. He says,

It’s no longer about culture though. It’s simply about where I should lend a hand which makes it a lot more real. Another point to raise is that our consumption

pattern has changed. We have become a lot more sophisticated in our lifestyle and it's more about the acquired taste than anything else. It should not take away from your value systems which make you authentically black. (15)

MS uses the term 'sophisticated' when describing modern black masculinity. 'Sophisticated' is a rather judgmental term which links traditional black masculinity with the term 'unsophisticated'. However, MS states that this sophistication should not replace traditional value systems which are described as 'authentically black'. The term 'authentically' links modern black identity with 'fake'. Thus, while traditional black masculinity is described as being unsophisticated it is also regarded as being the more authentic option, whereas modern black masculinity is both sophisticated and fake.

The binary separation of traditional and modern is geographically constructed. Traditional masculinities are enacted in different geographical spaces to those in which modern masculinities are performed. PM refers to dressing differently in Cape Town and Polokwane. Cape Town is a modern urban space whereas Polokwane is a rural, more traditional area. PM refers later to Soweto, an Apartheid black settlement as the site of soccer and *chisa nyama* and not the site of an upmarket restaurant for romantic dinners and smart suits. MS learnt to slaughter a cow for a traditional funeral in Katlehong, a traditional, rural area,

I went to a family funeral in Katlehong some time ago with my brother-in-law and found that we were the first relatives to arrive and nothing had been done. I rolled up my sleeves and got my manicured hands really dirty and literally had to learn how to slaughter a cow right there. My parents would have been really shocked simply because we seem so detached from such things as a generation. (15)

The contradiction between manicured hands and slaughtering a cow reinforced the geographic othering of tradition as being 'really dirty' and rural. Each of these men geographically separates their engagement with traditional culture from their modern lives. The separation is both rural and urban.



Figure 26. The main image on page 14.

This binary separation between traditional and modern black masculinity is superficial because the text is framed as a dialectical synthesis between traditional and modern black masculinity. The largest image in the text is the main image on page 14 (see figure 26). This

image shows all three discussants in animated discussion. They are seated around a modern, minimalist table, which is set with bright yellow table mats. The background has African inspired drapes and woven walls, with spray painted cacti. The overall feel of the background imagery of this picture is of contemporary African-inspired décor. The men are dressed in modern, western clothing. The image fuses tradition and modernity into contemporary black culture. This image acts as a visual representation of the synthesized modern black masculine ideal held by this article.

Throughout the text, the discussants reiterate their ability to adapt to whatever setting they find themselves in, whether it be Soweto or boutique mall, Melrose Arch. The most important element of this synthesized masculinity emphasized by the discussants is remaining true to their own identity. For example, when asked by *Blink*, “How much of an influence do you think women have on how you look or the way you present yourselves?” (15), PM replied,

We often come across as something we’re not. We went to Melrose Arch with a friend of mine recently. Now I smoke a strong brand of cigarettes which he happens to enjoy too. We were entertaining some ladies on this particular day at this posh restaurant when he decided to buy a different, lighter, sexier brand – to please these ladies – and I took him to task. That’s selling yourself so you can be viewed as being a class up, when all you’re doing is stooping low. (15)

Here, PM puts personal identity above impressing women, and even jeopardises a friendship by taking his friend to task about changing who he is for a woman. This statement is interesting because earlier in the article, PM stated that he adapts his look according to the situation,

As an individual, I shouldn’t be classified at all because I see myself as a chameleon. I have a specific look when I’m involved with poetry sessions, attending traditional functions or simply hanging out with friends. (14)

Thus despite vehemently opposing altering his identity for woman, supporting the idea of individualism, he earlier emphasises conformity to context.

Despite supporting the ideal of shifting identities which straddle tradition and modernity, PM and the other discussants actually end up boxing themselves, using stereotypes and clichéd language. When describing how he sees black masculinity in the future, MS uses highly clichéd language peppered with catch phrases and stereotypes,

We want to operate as global citizens. Our kids need to be exposed to as many ways of living as possible as not be shy to interact with cultures across the globe. The whole world is uniting and our kids are part of those moves. Even in business and the economic area, we are now trading globally, so we can't afford to see ourselves through a pigeon hole anymore, and restrict our choices. (16)

This diatribe against small traditionalism is full of clichés. The phrases, "global citizens", "the whole world is uniting" and "through a pigeon hole" are clichéd, recycled and reduce the credibility of this statement. This discourse speaks in terms of individualisation but in fact speaks in clichéd language that conforms to hegemonic bourgeois masculine ideals. Thus even though the subjects are speaking in terms of individuation and counter-hegemonic ideals, their use of self-conscious stereotyping and clichés reaffirms the hegemonic norm.



Figure 27. Johnnie Walker advertisement.

The text is further framed by the Johnnie Walker advertisement which is embedded into the text (see figure 27). The embedding of the advert naturalises the message of the advert into the text. Johnnie Walker is a whisky which in its brand campaign aims at connecting with successful men. This particular advertisement is embedded into the text and is particularly salient. There is a yellow line, which starts light yellow and slowly becomes darker as it traverses the text and becomes the Johnnie Walker label on page 15. This embeds the Johnnie Walker brand into this text. Thus the men in this article become framed as Johnnie Walker men, men of distinction. The campaign managers describe the 'Keep Walking' campaign, used in this article, as follows,

The 'Keep Walking' campaign is essentially about inspired personal progress, regardless of circumstance, language, profession or age. It revolved around the

though that driven by deeply rooted instincts, man will continually strive to achieve goals – and Johnnie Walker will accompany him on his individual journey.

(<http://www.jonniewalker.co.za/interface.asp>)

Embedding this advertisement into the text beyond merely placing the advert on an adjacent page says something about these men – it connects the brand with urban black masculinity. It sends an appealing message to the readers of this article, which is debating the congruence of traditional African masculinity and urban living. The message is simple; a successful man is one who, while mindful of his roots, continually strives forward. The advertisement confirms the normalised stereotypical, conformist bourgeois masculinity defined by the discussants through dialectical synthesis in the text.

7.5 Metrosexual, Übersexual and Retrosexual: hierarchical categorisation

The terminology used by the interviewees to discuss the nature of their synthesized modern black masculinity echoes masculine terminology circulating in contemporary popular culture. The interviewees discuss the different masculinities available to them through the terms ‘metrosexual’, ‘übersexual’ and the ‘retrosexual’. Sipiwe Mpye (SM), editor of *Blink*, defines these terms as follows:

The first was of course the Metrosexual man who cooked gourmet meals; was “in touch with his feminine side”; was well groomed and went for body treatments to manicures and pedicures and was comfortable with the colour pink. Then there was the ‘retrosexual’, the guy who – perhaps as a reaction to the Metrosexual – reverted to being a man’s man. He wanted to sit on the couch and watch TV while drinking beer, was clean but was not obsessive about his grooming and didn’t spend more time in front of the mirror than his girlfriend. More recently there has been talk about the Übersexual. This is the guy with metrosexual tendencies but is also partly a man’s man. He is very knowledgeable about women, politics, the economy, and the arts, can fix a car but also won’t get lost in a flower shop. (15)

The definitions given by SM, the editor and spokesperson for *Blink Magazine* focus on the tendencies of this popular terminology to box modern male identity into inappropriately narrow boxes. The negative use of these terms reaffirms the discussants’ opinion that contemporary black masculinity cannot be defined singularly. However, at

the same time, by using stereotypical masculinity to define what their masculinity is and is not, while attempting to be non-conformist, they end up boxing themselves.

All the discussants vehemently oppose the overt 'boxing' of their own masculine identity. PM said that, "As an individual, I shouldn't be classified at all because I see myself as a chameleon." (16) MS reiterates the same sentiments, "We simply shouldn't be boxed period. We are forever defining who we are and we all have different journeys in life." (16) SM follows suit, "The *Blink* man is constantly changing. I believe the ideal man is well refined with a bit of grit." (16) The men consider these stereotypes as being part of the future, creating a teleological distance between them and the stereotypes. While they discursively create geographic distance between traditional and modern masculinity, they create teleological distance between themselves and contemporary popular culture masculine stereotypes.

However, just as the mechanism of geographic distance is superficial, so too is the teleological distance constructed here. PM expressed that 'metrosexuality' was something that society was still moving towards. It is positioned positively as aspirational. PM says,

Metrosexuality will be our way of life. Our kids might even remove their nail varnish just before a rugby match, play their hearts out and do a paint touch up after the game.

MS holds a similar view, saying that,

You can't rule it out because we are a changing society and there will come a time five years from now and men might be doing it during the World Cup. All in all, I think the maintenance will become an issue because men are designed to be more nonchalant concerning their appearance. (16)

MS's attitude towards metrosexuality is fatalistic and essentialist. MS regards male ambivalence towards grooming as being part of their genetic makeup but at the same time regards the permeation of metrosexuality as being par for the course. Thus although the discussants are careful not to overtly 'box' themselves within these stereotypical masculinities, they construct themselves through their sons. While the 'retrosexual' and 'übersexual' are dismissed completely in this article, the 'metrosexual' is said to be the masculinity of the future. Thus the participants are placing significant value on it as a gender identity. The discourse of the 'metrosexual' is one of manicures and face cream, and in fact, this discourse is prevalent throughout as a way that these men talk about why

they are not 'metrosexuals' but hybrid black masculinity. Even while discussing how they do not fit into the 'metrosexual' role, they use 'metrosexual' discourse. For example, while discussing how he had to slaughter a cow for the funeral, MS says, "I rolled up my sleeves and got my manicured hands really dirty." Similarly, PM talks about getting a full body massage in Vietnam. While these men are trying to prove that the 'metrosexual' is a dying fad, they are actually creating a discourse around it, in much the same way Foucault argued about sexual repression and the discourse of sex. Foucault (1998:95) argued that power is productive because it stimulates resistance and thus by repressing a discourse, one would merely be producing resistance-based discourses on the same topic. These men seem to be somewhat aware of the process that they are contributing to because they acknowledge that the world of tomorrow is most likely going to be the world of the 'metrosexual'.

7.6 Modality and the Construction of the Author – Reader Relationship

The naturalisation of black masculinity as the norm requires the reader to consider himself to be an equal participant in the discussion and to regard the representations by this text as credible. The textual modality further contributes to the naturalisation of black bourgeois masculinity as the norm. Modality is the social semiotic approach to the question of truth and here, modality is used to reinforce an emergent norm by creating confidence in the norms construction (Van Leeuwen, 2005). As the receivers of millions of messages a day, we sort through these messages by assigning varying degrees of credibility to them (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996: 159). Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996: 159) argue that modality creates an imagined community between the author and the reader based on the reader's judgment of the credibility of the text. A low modality creates a strong rift between the author and the reader based on mistrust. The reader's judgment of credibility is based on their reading of modality markers embedded in the text itself (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996: 159). The verbal text has two main markers of high modality.

Firstly, the text is constructed as a discussion, as opposed to a feature article. Feature articles are often viewed with suspicion based on the ease at which an interviewee's words can be manipulated by the author. A discussion is more credible because the discussants' views are printed unedited as responses to direct questions unfettered by the author. Furthermore, a discussion is in direct speech, in the present tense, which gives the text immediacy and more credibility. Secondly, the discussants are important and popular members of society. Paul Mnisi is a Yfm DJ and music producer, Mandla Sibeko is the director of his own media company, Born Free Media, and Siphiwe Mpye is the editor of *Blink Magazine*. Each man has a position of power, which gives them more credibility. Siphiwe Mpye supports the article's modality individually too as the editor of the magazine. By lending his name and opinions to this discussion, he validates the representations made by the text. The high modality of this article gives credibility to the naturalisation of visible bourgeois black masculinity and creates a community with the reader in terms of this emergent norm.

The reader is constructed as being on the same level as the discussants by positioning the reader through its panel discussion layout. By containing a question and answer format that allows for multiple responses to a question, this article opens up the debate directly to the readers. Verbally, this is done through the questions and answers. The questions simultaneously address the panellists and the readers at large. The questions are not specifically addressed to any particular people, and thus their inferred subjects can be anyone. The *Blink* readers are black men living in contemporary South Africa, and thus although the question looks to be addressing the panellists, it also indirectly addresses the *Blink* reader critically engaging them in the debate.



Figure 28. The arrow indicates the fourth place setting.

This pattern is continued visually on page 14 in the main image. The image portrays the three discussants mid-discussion, with facial expressions and body language that indicate deep conversation. There is a fourth, empty place setting on the table closest to reader's point of view (see figure 28). What this does is insert the reader into the image as the fourth

participant in the debate. Thus the reader is indirectly addressed by the text both verbally and visually.

Blink Magazine editor, Siphwe Mpye plays an ambiguous role in the discussion. While he is the editor of the magazine, he is also supposedly an interviewee on the panel. However, his role within the text is directional. While the text is attributed to the unseen *Blink Magazine* journalist, Dineo Mokgoasi, his presence, but for the questions posed to the discussion group, is invisible, while the editor plays a much stronger role in the text. The journalist Mokgoasi asks the questions, for example,

Blink: With the emergence of terms like Metrosexuals ala David Beckham or Will Smith who always look like they've just been preened and buffed to perfection, is there a need to be classified into a similar mode of identity as a black man living in contemporary South Africa?

While the two discussants answer in terms of their own experience, the editor, SM, answers this question in reference to each of the other panel member's answers, summing up and drawing conclusions:

It's interesting what both of you saying because it speaks to both your individual identity. Paul is comfortable with what people perceive him to be because he is sure of whom he is. Say for instance, people have a certain perception of me (SM) dressing in suits and smart casual attire, minding my own business and I turn up at a friends gathering wearing *ispoti*, it would not be what they expect but would be part of who I am, not who they see me as. (14)

The editor acts as an imbedded journalist, commenting on what the two interviewees are saying. For instance, SM comments of Paul's self confidence, saying that, "people perceive him to be (comfortable) because he is sure of whom he is". Not only is SM giving his own perception of Paul, he is also guiding the way that the readers receive Paul.

7.7 Summary

In summary, this chapter has examined how black masculinity as an emergent norm has become visible. It has applied the three levels of description, representational, interactive and compositional to the *Blink* article, "Modern Male Identity" (2006). The focus has been on how normative black bourgeois masculinity is naturalised through visual and verbal patterning, binary opposition, classification hierarchies and dialectical synthesis between traditional and modern black masculinity. *Blink Magazine* used the intertextual terminology of the 'metrosexual', 'retrosexual' and 'übersexual' as a stereotypical reference point to direct the reader's attention to the emergent norm of black bourgeois masculinity available to black men in contemporary South African culture. While *GQ*, *FHM* and *Men's Health* have used discursive textual mechanisms such as irony and metaphor to create an intimate, yet emotionally elusive space where their readers can navigate the ambiguities of contemporary masculinity, it is clear that *Blink Magazine* is discursively establishing a new, emergent masculine norm. This norm has been created through the dialectical synthesis of modern and traditional black masculinity. This binary has been created through the use of cliché, stereotypes and geographic and teleological distancing.

Chapter 8

Re-theorising the so-called 'crisis'

8.1 Introduction

The role played by the media in the formation of our identities is a complex conundrum examined by some of the greatest minds of our time. Foucault (1980) argued that identities are fashioned out of the resources available to people in popular discourses. This is not to say that popular discourses are the only resources available for identity construction. There are a multitude of social practices which may influence identities. As Fairclough argues, "the relationship between discourse and other elements of social practices is a dialectical relationship – discourse internalises and is internalised by other elements without the different elements being reducible to each other" (2001: 3). The media are a significant site of dialectical struggle between popular discourses and other social practices. This thesis has shown that the appearance of men's lifestyle magazines in South Africa has raised questions about their content and alleged effects on their readers as a gendered identity resource.

8.1.2 The 'crisis'

More specifically, men's magazines have been criticised for their role in the so-called 'crisis' in masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity is often represented somewhat simplistically as being in 'crisis'. Buchbinder (1994), Clare (2000) and Faludi (1999) argue that this 'crisis' stems from the breakdown of traditional patriarchy which maintained men's roles in society. However, Connell (1995) insists that there is little evidence of a generalised 'crisis' in patriarchal structures of power which are hegemonically maintained through masculine discourses. In fact, sociological evidence discussed by Segal (1990) and others, reveals that changes in gender relations are actually

incredibly slow. The 'crisis', if you can call it that, does not seem to lie with hegemonic masculine power as much as within discursive constructions of masculine identity. In the past ten years there has been an explosion of possible masculinities in South African popular culture, moving away from the singular pronunciation of hegemonic masculinity available to men in the past. I have argued, in line with Giddens (1991) that, 'post traditional' society has provided the individual with more varied and flexible identities to choose from. Gender as a self-reflexive project then allows the self to be constructed from a multitude of available resources. The recent explosion of resources in the post-modern world has created a 'crisis' of choice – a deep seated anxiety surrounding the mounting possibilities for identity construction. Options require choices and choices can cause anxiety.

Academic debate surrounding the role played by men's lifestyle magazines in the construction of the 'crisis' can be divided roughly into two camps. There are those, like Whelehan (2000), who argue that men's lifestyle magazines override the message of feminism, constructing a world where patriarchy remains intact. This view holds that men's lifestyle magazines are reacting against the 'crisis' by creating a retrospective world where the 'crisis' never happened. Others, such as Gauntlett (2002), argue that Whelehan's argument is a rather superficial articulation of what men's magazines are all about. I join Gauntlett (2002) in arguing that men's magazines assist men in negotiating their identities in the modern, post-feminist world. This thesis has aimed to examine the way in which men's lifestyle magazines negotiate the idea that masculinity is in 'crisis' by analysing the constructions of discourses of masculinity in contemporary South African men's lifestyle magazines. Key to this examination is the extent to which they are offering up new and complex models of masculinity or reaffirming more traditional models.

8.1.3 Review of analysis

In the analysis chapters I examined how *GQ*, *FHM*, *Men's Health* and *Blink* magazine discursively construct masculinity. I focused on the content of the magazines in June 2006, a period marked specifically by the re-entry of *GQ* magazine onto the South African market, providing a wider degree of plurality on the men's shelf at the local newsstand. My analysis focused on the use of irony and metaphor, and the admiration of excessive risk, which I argued are manifestations of ambiguities of contemporary masculinity, sometimes realised as anxiety. These manifestations work within a 'crisis' discourse, providing a discursive space to negotiate possible unease with intimate identity issues. I could have focused on other features, such as sports, editorial content or representations of women. However, I decided to focus on 'crisis' discourse because much of this coincided with recent writing on gender transformation in the post-feminist era, and because intimate identity issues seem to present a genuinely 'new' aspect in print media for men. Given the immense popularity of these magazines in South Africa (*FHM* and *Men's Health* are two of South Africa's most popular magazines), and the fact that many of their features concern men's behaviour and relationship with them, it seemed likely that these magazines "represented an acceptable vehicle for exploring the more intimate aspects of masculinity for which few alternative spaces currently exist" (Jackson et al. 2001: 74).

The analysis model I used focused on both visual and verbal content. This created a multimodal analysis space for the identification of the masculine discourses available in lifestyle magazines. As I argued in chapter 3, the analysis of available discourses within these magazines took place through a discussion of certain articles at length rather than through a quantitative overview of the magazines' contents. The particular focus of this analysis was on the magazines stylistic and narrative construction: how they looked and how they told their stories. More particularly, my analysis explored the different masculine discourses made available to the magazines' readers. Without making assumptions about how these magazines are read, the analysis chapters explored the

semiotic codings and contradictions offered, showing how the texts express and construct a deep sense of unease amongst their readers about identity.

In order to sharpen my focus, I began by focusing on questions of masculinities, presenting a critique of the ways that these magazines specifically handle questions connected with intimate identity issues. What became evident is that the magazines reflected a concern for private, intimate spheres of masculine identities which more traditional versions of masculinity have ignored. In the analysis chapters I have argued that these magazines have opened up a discursive space to engage actively with some of the ambiguities and contradictions offered by contemporary masculinity.

8.1.4 South African men's lifestyle magazines

Each of the magazines addresses a different group of readers. *FHM*, in general, address the readers as friends. The magazine attempts to be the reader's 'friend' by providing, in a humorous and ironic tone, helpful hints and useful advice. By using humour and irony, *FHM* makes sure that they do not talk down to their readers. For example, *FHM* provides the phone numbers of their production staff at the front of the magazines, run a 4 page letters section (where the readers send in photographs of themselves doing strange or gory things) and various sections offering advice on everything, from sex to the heavy metal band *Metallica*.

Men's Health on the other hand has incorporated many of these laddish features, but with a more technical focus on detail. There is a clear distinction between the 'expert' (the magazine) and the person in need of advice (the reader) (Jackson et al. 2001). The presumed set of social relations between *Men's Health* and its readers is hierarchical,

It is assumed that the flow of knowledge is overwhelmingly one way (from the magazine to the reader), but that the magazine can be trusted (like a good doctor) not to mislead the reader (Jackson et al 2001: 77).

Unlike *FHM*'s ironic disposition, *Men's Health* presumes a social hierarchy with the magazine inviting believing, rather than an equal relationship of shared insincerity.

Internationally, *GQ* has a reputation as a more upmarket publication than *FHM*, aiming at a slightly older man. *GQ*'s international parent, *GQ* UK started out as a content driven publication, lad magazines such as *FHM* gained popularity, *GQ*'s content started moving more towards 'babes and boobs' (Jackson et al. 2001: 77). *Blink* is unique to South Africa and offers a mixture of *GQ* and African masculinity to its readers. It commonly deals with issues of black masculinity and focuses heavily on the successful black man who straddles the modern, westernised world and his traditions. In this respect, the magazine could be said to occupy a terrain where certain issues in respect to African traditions are given increased visibility, but in such a way that they do not contradict dominant constructions of heterosexual masculinity.

8.2 Men's lifestyle magazines as a site of struggle

I have argued that while most of these magazines are undoubtedly a celebration of hegemonically dominant heterosexual masculinity, as with the dialogism of all texts, they are also a site of struggle. Bakhtin (1981) argues that the text is dialogic because the discourse is always open and constantly changing. Bakhtin's editors point out that "dialogue can be external (between two different people) or internal (between an earlier and a later self)," and "a word, discourse, language, or culture undergoes 'dialogization' when it becomes relativised, de-privileged, aware of competing definitions for the same thing. Undialogized language is authoritative or absolute" (1981: 427). Metaphoric language is thus an apparatus of dialogism because it allows for dynamic and multiple discourses in a text.

In the *Men's Health* article, "Cuban Muscle Crisis" (2006) I argue that there are three main discourses, the discourse of 'body as machine', the Communist discourse and the Capitalist discourse (which are pitted against each other in a discursive struggle for hegemonic control). The discourse of 'body as machine' is constructed through narrative mirror patterning, subject – author construction and otherness. Gill (2001) argues that the male body has become objectified by the 'male gaze' leading to a mounting anxiety

amongst men about their bodies and performance. The metaphoric discourse of 'body as machine' creates an intimate, yet emotionally elusive space where *Men's Health* readers can navigate ambiguities of identity. Connell (2003; 1995) argues that within body-reflexive practices, bodies become a gendered point of reference whereby they are both agents and objects of practices. As a social references point, a bodily metaphor is necessarily dynamic and constantly changing in the same way that Bakhtin (1981) argued that the text is dialogic. Dialogism explains the effect of multiple discourses from different strata of society represented simultaneously in a text.

The articles are all dialogic because they allow for multiple voices and multiple points of view to exist within the text. In *GQ* magazine, dialogism allows irony to express two opposing views simultaneously. I have argued in chapter four that *GQ* magazine denies Whelehan's claim that men's lifestyle magazines dismiss changes in gender roles through 'jokes', overriding the message of feminism and other social movements. Irony is certainly used by *GQ* as a form of humour, however, masculinity is not a frivolous matter, and is most certainly a worthy subject for such an investigation. *GQ* uses irony to create a safe space for their readers to negotiate new models of masculinity while concurrently existing within the hegemonic masculinity currently in circulation. Dialogism thus allows the text to be both supportive of hegemony and resistant to it at the same time. Binary oppositions construct language in opposing duality, assisting dialogism to occur within texts.

8.3 Binaries as a hegemonic

The use of binary oppositions allows a dialogic text to support and resist hegemony simultaneously. Binary oppositions, which occur in all four articles analysed, allow for a dialogic duality of discourses within a text. In *FHM's* "Pablo and the Charlie Factory" (2006), construction of the dominant war-like discourse occurs through the creation of visual and verbal binaries. Binary oppositions between subjects regarded as 'goodies' and those regarded as the 'baddies' are constructed throughout the text, feeding into the war-

like discourse. This binary opposition is used to express an underlying glorification of excessively risky behaviour by contributing to and strengthening the prevalent war-like discourse. One would expect that the infamously violent Pablo Escobar would be constructed as a 'baddie', if not the ultimate 'bad guy'. However, the representation of Escobar ambivalently shifts between 'good' and 'bad', finally resting on good as Escobar's death is glorified. *FHM*'s war-like discourse relies heavily on this binary opposition because war requires the existence of 'goodies' and 'baddies'. For a war to be validated there needs to be an enemy threat, which is created through this binary opposition. Essentially, the binary of 'good' versus 'bad' constructs the war-like opposition, because it separates 'self' from 'other' and illegitimizes the 'other' to legitimise 'self'. Binaries separate everything into two categories: that which is self and that which is not. This thesis argues that the implications of binaries for the negotiation of self are thus that self can only be constructed against the other, limiting our options for identity construction.

As in *FHM*, underlying concerns about shifting popular masculinities is expressed in *GQ*'s, "Tough Guys" (2006), through binary opposition in both the article and the quiz. The dominant binary created within this text is between the 'metrosexual' and the 'übersexual'. The 'metrosexual' is presented in this text as representing the 'self' as evidenced by the fact that many attributes of this identity are praised in the text. 'Übersexuals' are presented as being the alternative to 'metrosexuals', and marks the uneasiness surrounding modern male identity. The construction of this binary opposition essentialises constructions of gender by inferring that being a 'tough guy' or 'übersexual' is a *natural* state for all men. The opposition uses this essentialism ironically to express the unpleasant truth that not all men are 'tough guys' or 'übersexuals' and that there are ambiguities surrounding contemporary masculinities.

In the *Men's Health* article, "Cuban Muscle Crisis" (2006), the metaphor of 'body as machine' is knotted throughout the text and it is used to construct a struggle between self and other. This discourse is closely linked to the economic discourses of Capitalism and Communism. The discursive construction and struggle between these two discourses

further realises the construction of self through other. The division between us and them is interesting, because it encourages the reader to other the Cubans. Othering separates the readers from the subject of the article, making their differences more apparent. The binary opposition between Communism and Capitalism is reinforced through a secondary binary opposition of pride versus sympathy which is also evident throughout the text. The readers are encouraged to feel sympathy for the Cuban bodybuilders, which creates an unequal relationship between subject and object. However, in response to this, the bodybuilders express a deep sense of pride in their sport and their gym. The cumulative effect of both sets of binary oppositions is that it categorically separates self from other which neutralises the common bond of humanity.

In the *Blink Magazine* article “Modern Male Identity” (2006), the primary binary oppositions are of traditional black masculinities versus modern westernised masculinities. The text creates this binary opposition by questioning the relevance of western masculinities, thereby othering them. The text constructs the ‘self’ masculinity as African. Traditional masculinities are constructed in different geographical spaces to those in which modern masculinities present. However, the binary opposition between traditional and modern black masculinity is superficial because the text is framed as an attempt at constructive dialectical synthesis. The ‘Modern-Traditional’ binary categorisation is opposed by the interviewees, who refuse to be labelled as either completely modern or completely traditional. However, despite the interviewee’s attempts to discursively construct a modern African masculinity, they actually end up boxing themselves into another hegemonic modern African heterosexual masculinity, using stereotypes and clichéd language. Binaries enable dialogic support and resistance of hegemony, as well as creating binary space between self and other.

8.4 Discursive constructions of self through other

8.4.1 Binary space

I have argued that the construction of self and other in opposition allows for dialogic duality within a text. Discursive constructions of self through other also construct a space between what is conceptually 'self' and 'other'. Bakhtin argued that "Discourse lives, as it were, on the boundary between its own context, and another, alien context" (1981: 284). One of Saussure's (1959) main points about analysing language was that words do not make sense on their own. The meaning of a word depends on the fact that words are part of a system of difference – the meaning of words is relational. For example, the word 'up' means nothing unless we can connect it to the word 'down'. Saussure (1959) stated that, "in language there are only differences...a difference generally implies positive terms between which the difference is set up; but in language there are only differences without positive terms" (120). Saussure (1959: 121) argued that language is constructed out of opposition, he argues, "difference makes character". Thus, what Saussure (1959) is arguing is that words can only have meaning in relation to other words. The concept of duality or opposition is fundamental to western thinking. We make sense of the world through oppositions because each word is defined by what it is not and only makes sense if we understand its opposite as well.

Within every binary, that which is constructed as self is given a higher value to that which is constructed as a threatening other. The discursive construction of self then enables an ordering of discourses, giving preference to the hegemonic. Fairclough (2001) argues that social practices are networked to create social order. The order of discourse the manner in which multiple genres, styles and discourses constitute this network (Fairclough, 2001: 2). Fairclough (2001: 2) argues that, "An order of discourse is a social structuring of semiotic difference – a particular social ordering of relationships amongst different ways of making meaning." In any system of ordering is a process where certain meanings are more dominant than others in a particular order of discourse

(Fairclough, 2001: 2). A particular semiotic difference evident in social structuring may become hegemonic, validating and legitimizing the status quo (Fairclough, 2001: 2). Thus binaries become one of the ways in which orders of discourse may be established and hegemonic forces allowed to continue.

The clearest example of hegemony established through binaries can be found in *FHM* where the division is between good and bad. However, in chapter five, Pablo Escobar is not what one would normally describe as being 'good' according to the general morals of society. This reveals the social relativism of binaries – in the context of *FHM*, the excessively risky lifestyle of Pablo Escobar is seen as a good thing and those who tried to punish him are ultimately the 'bad guys'. In *GQ* magazine, the 'übersexual' is a new popular culture masculinity. New identities are potentially threatening and thus by positioning the 'übersexual' against the 'metrosexual' self construction, the identity is othered and the threat is neutralised. In *Men's Health*, the use of the words 'Cuban' and 'Crisis' intertextually frame communism negatively as being the source of the 'crisis'. Historical and cultural awareness is needed by the *Men's Health* readers to decipher this intertextual reference completely, but very little specific knowledge is needed to translate this reference to mean communism is bad. Thus the order of discourse is established through the construction of binary oppositions whereby the self is hegemonic and the other is either counter-hegemonic or an alternative.

A more complicated hegemonic struggle occurs in the *FHM* article. Throughout the text there is a binary separation between the 'goodies' and the 'baddies' which feeds into the prevalent war-like discourse. However, who falls into those categories shifts multiple times. Generally, one would assume that a mainstream magazine would paint the Colombian drug lord responsible for the global cocaine pandemic in a negative light. However, due to the fact that this article is glorifying excessive risk, the representation of Pablo Escobar constantly shifts from being 'good' to 'bad' to 'good'. At the end of the article, he is described as falling into the good category, as "The king of coke" (74). This is a positive categorisation and the idea that an infamous drug lord is good is counter-hegemonic. By categorising Escobar and his associates as being more 'good' than 'bad',

this article is glorifying excessive risk. The idea that young men play with excessive risk is hegemonic, and thus this article uses one counter-hegemonic discursive construction to support the dominant model of hegemonic masculinity.

This thesis has argued that the construction of binaries allows for dialogic duality within a text allowing hegemony to be simultaneously resisted and supported. Within all groups of discourses, there is an innate system of ordering. I have argued that binaries are one of the ways in which orders of discourse may be established. Binary oppositions construct self as hegemonic and other as either counter-hegemonic or an alternative discourse, establishing the order of discourse within the text. Dialogism and binaries also allow counter-hegemonic discourses to support the dominant model of hegemonic masculinity within the same text.

8.4.2 Establishment of order of discourse through self/other binary

Binaries can establish the order of discourse within a text by constructing a hegemonic 'self'. However, due to dialogism, hegemony is always being contested in hegemonic struggle, which means that an order of discourse cannot be a closed social system (Fairclough, 2001: 2). In *Blink* the attempt to synthesize the opposites is evident in the way that each binary has a positive and negative attribute. While traditional black masculinity is described as being unsophisticated it is also regarded as being the more 'authentic' option, whereas modern black masculinity is represented as being both sophisticated and fake. This is an attempt at dialectical synthesis, which posits the binaries as being equal, and not requiring an either/or position. It is an attempt because the men discursively digress into clichés and stereotypes which indicate that the synthesis has not actually been successful. The use of clichés and stereotypes to discuss the interviewees' idiosyncrasy and individualism could indicate a sense of unease with their synthesized identity and regression into a group self.

Clichés and stereotypes could be seen as markers of hegemony in that they are viewed as being commonsense. What is evident here is a hegemonic struggle between a previously

hegemonic traditional black masculinity and its opposition, modern black masculinity. While the interviewees argue that they are individuals who are capable of reconstituting their identity to suit their environment, synthesizing their identities, the language that they use to describe their multifaceted identities reveals an un-synthesized duality embroiled in a hegemonic struggle. When talking about traditional black masculinity, the men use 'tsotsie taal', a local vernacular used in the townships and when they talk about their modern masculinity, they use clichés and stereotypes. Clichés and stereotypes are the language of hegemony - they are words and phrases used so often that they become common. Clichés and stereotypes thus close down the struggle alluded to by the dialectical synthesis, retaining the separation between traditional and modern black masculinity, hegemonically favouring western masculine discourses. Thus, these binaries reinforce the hegemonic masculinities discourse of society.

The *GQ* article uses excessive irony to support the hegemonic norm. The men constructed as 'other' in the article, such as Muhammed Ali have 'tough guy' images, whereas Chuck Norris has become an ironic internet icon. The text uses excessive irony to point out the impossibility of this extreme masculinity. Such dismissal acknowledges and reinforces the magazines hegemonic 'metrosexual' orientation. The shutting down of changing trends in masculinity through excessive irony in the *GQ* article further reinforces hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic favouring of capitalist discourse is evident in the *Men's Health* Article. The discursive construction and struggle between these two discourses further realises the subject as other and constructs the self. A resultant binary between pride and sympathy accompanies that of the Communism versus Capitalism debate. The reader is encouraged to feel sympathy for the Communists, which discursively constructs an unequal relationship between Communist and Capitalist discourses, establishing Capitalism as hegemonic.

In modern Western thought, everything is conceptualised through difference. The meaning all words depend on a system of difference. The meaning of every word is relational to the meaning of others. We understand this system of oppositional meaning as being relative because within every binary, the self is always valued more than the

other. I argue that this innate valuing is a mechanism enabling the construction of an order of discourse, where the self is hegemonic and the other is either counter-hegemonic or an alternative. As I have already argued, men's lifestyle magazines are dialogic texts whereby hegemony is under constant attack, which means that the orders of discourses occurring in them are not a closed social system. The implication of my argument is that the experience of hegemonic masculinities is one of struggle.

8.5 Dominant Discourses and Identity

The overall dialogue, which exists in each of these magazine articles, is the articulation of 'self' through 'other'. I argue that one of the ways these texts open up and close down at the same time is through the process of binaries. While binaries shut down the options for self construction by only providing the other as that which is not self, it also opens a discursive space up to negotiate identity within the tight space between the opposites. Butler (1990) argues that gender is a constituted performance. Butler (1993: 95) clarified her theory of performativity with Derrida's (1976) theory of iterability, which argues that social norms are regularized and constrained through repetition. Iterability implies that the performance of gender is never a singular act; it is shaped by the norms of society. This explains how performativity allows the production of naturalised gender to be possible while at the same time opening the subject to debate and contestation through the reproduction of hegemonic gender identity.

Hegemonic practices will direct and influence the individual's thoughts and behaviour because hegemony is the process whereby the individual is collectively determined. Thus anything which may threaten or offer an alternative to hegemony in terms of which the self is constructed, is constructed as other. Construction of self through other is a performance, which is contextually reconstituted. Butler (1990: 25) argues that there is, "no gender identity behind the expressions of gender". Thus, constructions of masculinity through binaries are not constitutive of masculine identity itself. Butler (1990: 25) argues then that, "identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results". In other words, gender is performatively constituted through action in particular contexts, rather than a universal, naturalised term. However, Butler (1990: 171

– 190) argues that certain cultural configurations of genders have seized hegemonic control over our social relations, making certain performances of gender seem natural and commonsensical. I argue that hegemony provides the scripts available for gender performance.

Binaries close down space by limiting the resources available for the negotiation of self (the only other option is the other) while at the same time opening a discursive space between self and other. This space allows emergent masculinities to arise and to be discursively constructed in a non-threatening environment. Thus it would seem to me that it is this space between self and other that is popularly termed ‘the crisis of masculinity’. The space is by its very nature extremely constrained between the two points of the duality and thus ‘crisis’ can only be managed within the space. The binaries between self and other create the so called ‘crisis’ as well as the discursive space to negotiate anxiety surrounding contemporary masculinity.

8.6 Implications and suggestions for further research

My final word is that it was clear to me in the literature review section of this thesis that little local academic attention has been paid to South African lifestyle magazines as a site of masculine discourse. While this may be due to the fact that men’s lifestyle magazines are an emergent phenomenon in the local media landscape, it is my hope that this thesis peaks others’ interest in this field, providing some company to this lonely inquiry into the discourses of masculine identities constructed by South African men’s magazines. Furthermore, I hope that this thesis opens up a new path of inquiry into the nature of the so-called ‘crisis’ in masculinity. While academics such as Connell (1995) have dismissed the idea that there is a ‘crisis’ in masculinity, theorists of popular culture disagree. Perhaps academics should accept popular cultures word on this subject and spend more time examining the notion that masculinity is in ‘crisis’. Lastly, I think further research into the way readers negotiate the discourses of masculinity available to them in men’s lifestyle magazines would enhance our knowledge in this area. How much of what has been elucidated and examined in my thesis do men actually *use* discursively to construct

their identities? Discursive analysis offers us a way of examining the media and its consumers in a less fixed and non-rigid way. It opens up a multitude of new possibilities.

The critical nature of this research suggests a wonderful richness at the intersection of media, identity and discourse, which are bound intrinsically together and are yet a significant site of struggle. It is the critical nature of this research, which has chosen to vertically penetrate the texts through the analysis of four specific texts rather than horizontally analyse the magazines over a period, while creating depth, constricts and limits itself at the same time. The significance of this research is twofold; it has explored the discursive constructions of masculinities in men's lifestyle magazines, within the particular context of South Africa, using a unique intersection between critical discourse analysis and social semiotics. Secondly, it has re-examined the idea that masculinity is in 'crisis', shifting the focus away from the idea that patriarchy has somehow been dismantled, and focused my attention onto the explosion of resources available for the construction of masculinities.

At the beginning of this exploration into South African men's lifestyle magazines, I proposed that perhaps these magazines are providing South African men with a unique synthesis within masculine discourses between traditional models of masculinity and more progressive modes. The process offered by the magazines is more complex, and I argue that while the magazines are stringently adhering to and reinforcing hegemonic masculinities, the utilisation of binaries both establishes the norm whilst at the same time providing the space to deal with the so called 'crisis' or anxiety arising out of the emergence of new masculine discourses. Obviously, one cannot assume that all South African men read men's lifestyle magazines. Nor can we assume that those men, who do read local men's lifestyle magazines, do so passively. Nevertheless, local men's lifestyle magazines remain significant sites for exploration of discourses of masculinity. As chapter one has shown, emerging discourses in local men's lifestyle magazines have replaced earlier homogenised discourses available in local soft porn such as *Scope Magazine*. I have followed the advice of Gauntlett (2002) and primarily assessed the many different types of masculinities being presented to men by the various men's

lifestyle magazines. This information will allow a more thorough consideration of their impact in later studies.

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Appendix 1

Makgoasi, D. (2006) 'Modern Male Identity', Blink Magazine, March 2006, 14-16.

MODERN MALE IDENTITY

PHOTOGRAPHS: Hush Naidoo @ Jade Photography



TO BOX OR NOT TO BOX?

The Panel

Paul 'Rudeboy' Mnisi (PM):
Yfm DJ and music producer
Mandla Sibeko (MS):
Director Born Free Media
Siphiwe Mpye (SM):
Editor, BLINK Magazine

In these times when there are a myriad labels attached to the modern man, we ask how relevant these western tags are to men in the southern most tip of Africa.

By Dineo Mokgoasi

Blink: With the emergence of terms like Metrosexuals ala David Beckham or Will Smith who always look like they've just been preened and buffed to perfection, is there a need to be classified into a similar mode of identity as a black man living in contemporary South Africa?

PM: As an individual, I shouldn't be classified at all because I see myself as a chameleon. I have a specific look when I'm involved with poetry sessions, attending traditional functions or simply hanging out with my friends. I do take pride in my image and select each item of clothing carefully. Hence I can play (DJ) in Cape Town and look different from when I play in Polokwane, for instance. I guess it's the state of mind I'm in which dictates the way I look. People will always try to box you into a category to alleviate their confusion about you, especially if you're a public figure. That's why I'm a black chameleon and forever changing.

MS: We simply shouldn't be boxed period. We are forever defining who we are and we all have different journeys in

life. I am primarily an African, although a well traveled one and need not necessarily represent Africa in the way I dress, but through how I sound and the knowledge of my continent. From definitions of Metrosexuality, I don't dress like David Beckham and the likes. My style is inspired by the magazines I read, my travels and I'm not trying to mimic anyone in particular.

SM: I seriously doubt they (David Beckhams) dress themselves anyway. They have an entourage of stylists and image consultants who decide what their look should be on the day, which means it's not their personal style or choice coming through. It's interesting what both of you are saying because it speaks to both your individual identity. Paul is comfortable with what people perceive him to be because he is sure of whom he is. Say for instance, people have a certain perception of me dressing in suits and smart casual attire, and on this particular occasion on the weekend, minding my own business and I turn up at a friend's

gathering wearing *ispoti*, it would not be what they expect but could be a part of who I am, not who they see me as.

BLINK: Do you think there are guys who are slaves to what they want to be perceived as?

PM: People stick to a certain image for the simple economic reason that they need to be recognized by their audience. I say they shouldn't be driven by their market, but should rather keep them guessing about their next move. They are interested in you anyway and surely they'll get used to whatever image you portray, provided your product is good. Don't be driven by anybody, just by what you feel. You ultimately have to live with yourself.

MS: I go to certain shops and I choose what I want. The assistants want to influence what I wear because they've decided which bracket I fall into as soon as I walk through the door. They sell to a lot of black executives and assume that every one of us appreciates a certain style

or brand. I know what looks good on me and which colours best suit me. Whether the colour for that season is red or orange doesn't matter because I'm into blue, I'll put my own outfit together with or without their help.

SM: This whole boxing of the modern man is very intriguing. In various media in recent years, I have seen at least three "types" of men identified. The first was of course the Metrosexual man who cooked gourmet meals; was "in touch with his feminine side"; was well groomed and went for body treatments to manicures and pedicures and was comfortable with the colour pink. Then there was the "Retrosexual", the guy who – perhaps as a reaction to Metrosexuality – reverted to being a man's man. He wanted to sit on the couch and watch TV while drinking beer, was clean but was not obsessive about his grooming and didn't spend more time in front of the mirror than his girlfriend. More recently there has been talk about the Ubersexual. This is the guy with Metrosexual tendencies but is also partly a man's man. He is very knowledgeable about women, politics, the economy, the arts, can fix a car but also won't be lost in a flower shop.

When I think about this Metrosexual buzzword – which thankfully is dying –, it is interesting because I feel this kind of man has always existed, he has just evolved. We all knew those older guys who even if they lived in a little back room at home, he was always clean, immaculately dressed, fresh s-curl, the best cologne and the priciest shoes.

PM: Even further back to the Sophiatown era, looking good has always been part of the black man's culture, regardless of his financial status. You'd find a guy living in a two-roomed house, but has the best clothes, is sporting the latest watches and colognes with his hair neatly cut and so on.

Putting men in the kind of boxes you mention is tricky. A lot of us are in medium to high financial brackets and are complex. I could wake up on a Saturday morning and decide to get my car washed in Soweto and hook myself up with *chisa nyama* or go to the stadium for a soccer match. In the evening however, I could get dressed really smart and enjoy a candle lit dinner by a crackling fire in the company of my significant other in an upmarket restaurant.

MS: I went to a family funeral in Katsieng some time ago with my brother-in-law and found that we were the first relatives to arrive and nothing had been done. I rolled up my sleeves and got my manicured hands really dirty and literally had to learn how to slaughter a cow right there. My parents would have been really shocked simply because we seem so detached from such things as a generation. It's no longer about culture though. It's simply about where I should lend a hand which makes it a lot more real. Another point to raise is that our consumption pattern has changed. We have become a lot more sophisticated in our lifestyle and it's more about the acquired taste than anything else. It should not take away from your value systems which make you authentically black.

BLINK: How much of an influence do you think women have on how you look or the way you present yourselves?

PM: We often come across as something we're not. We went to Melrose Arch with a friend of mine recently. Now I smoke a strong brand of cigarettes which he happens to enjoy too. We were entertaining some ladies on this particular day at this posh restaurant when he decided to buy a different, lighter, sexier brand – to please these ladies – and I took him to task. That's selling yourself so you can be viewed as being a class up, when all you're doing is stooping low.

MS: Women do play a role simply because they might introduce you to the various available grooming treatments. But a man must spend time with himself to discover what works for him as to not be influenced by anyone. Read and think for yourself and make your own deductions.

PM: I can understand body treatments, massages and such, but what I can't make peace with is why men go for manicures and pedicures and put nail varnish on. I remember my sister clipping my dad's nails and toenails and she would file them down nicely and soak them in a solution. It's understandable that your nails shouldn't look bitten and shockingly dirty. What's up with the nail varnish though?

SM: I've been biting my nails since I can remember. I decided to stop biting them as an early new year's resolution and now I'm more conscious of how

'Metrosexuality will be our way of life. Our kids might even remove their nail varnish just before a rugby match, play their hearts out and do a paint touch up after the game.' – *Paul Mnisi*



my hands look. I always thought my charming personality would win people over (laughs), but now I want my hands to be part of the allure (more laughter). Although I have had all sorts of pampering at various spas and am generally well groomed, my nails have always bothered me. I have never been for a manicure simply because it would have been a waste of money with the shocking nails I had.

PM: I went to Vietnam recently to perform with my band and decided to try an authentic Vietnamese massage. She did my whole body from head to toe with various oils and different hand methods with calming music playing and so on. I was feeling all relaxed and sleepy and the next thing I knew, she moved her hands from my thighs to my groin area, cupped my testicles in her hand and asked, "Happy ending?", as if to ask if





'Our kids need to be exposed to as many ways of living as possible and not be shy to interact with cultures across the globe' - Mandla Sibeko

she could proceed to the next level of the session (laughter)! I was so shocked at how candid she was. I declined (laughter and skepticism). But I thoroughly enjoyed the massage. It's something one should do often.

BLINK: Do you think we are heading to a time where men will be doing these things at home alone? Will they be buying their own home make over kits and fighting with their spouses for nail varnish? Where does one draw the line?

MS: I would never get a DIY kit nor do the whole nail varnish thing. It's all about looking my own personal best at all times. I'm generally a very neat person who showers twice a day and I'm shocked sometimes at how my sisters will spend the whole day having washed in the morning, come evening, they just change into a different outfit and not shower again. So I'm bordering on being obsessed with hygiene. Looking spick and span is acceptable to a certain degree because I do have my nails buffed to have them shine. I draw the line at nail varnish personally.

PM: Where it really gets tricky is maintaining this whole varnishing process and the look in general. What happens when all the salons are fully booked? Or we decide to attend a Pirates and Chiefs soccer match at the stadium with friends and Themba opens his manicure kit and start filing away and pushing back his cuticles.

MS: You can't rule it out because we are a changing society and there will come a time five years from now and men might be doing it during the World Cup. All in all, I think the maintenance will become an issue because men are designed to be more non-chalant concerning their appearance.

SM: If we look at how we grew up with the extended family, you had certain experiences together which carved your current personality and how you do things. So when you meet them at family gatherings and you're chilling with your cousin who still lives at the back room *ekasi*, do does he look at you looking all polished and call you things like *lebojwa*?

PM: My parents shipped me off to boarding school, so I was away from *ekasi* for a while. Whenever I'd be home for the holidays, the guys I grew up with flipped from calling me Mvulane to 'my man'. I wasn't shunned as such because I knew who I was.

They saw my authenticity towards them and realised my value and tried to tap into my mind positively.

MS: I moved around a lot. I have a close cousin whom I saw recently from Katlehong. He became a really big thug back in the day and he really menaced the community to the point that he couldn't return home after serving his jail sentence. I embraced him and didn't judge him a thug because there must have been a deep reason why he turned out like he did. I still see him as my cousin. That surprised him because the perception is that I'm detached from room and I look down on people, just because I have a better lifestyle. But no one will ever come right out and say that I'm this or that. They see that I'm beyond my image.

SM: I have a son who's almost three. He's growing up in a world where he has


an Afrikaner friend; he speaks a hybrid of Xhosa, English which he picked up at play school and Zulu from his nanny and my mother. They are obviously growing up in a more heterogeneous society where what was once taboo or alien will become the norm. In terms of how things are rapidly changing, how will our kids perceive us and will they be conscious of their own image as we currently are?

PM: Looking into the future, Metrosexuality will be our way of life. Our kids might even remove their nail varnish just before a rugby match, play their hearts out and do a paint touch up after the game. Their tog bags will have grooming kits in there as well. Somizi Mhlongo is groundbreaking in terms of breaking down barriers and stereotypes by creating characters like Madam Gigi and making money from being open and celebratory about his sexuality. Such moves will be the norm in years to come.

MS: We want to operate as global citizens. Our kids need to be exposed to as many ways of living as possible and not be shy to interact with cultures across the globe. The whole world is uniting and our kids are part of those moves. Even in business and the economic arena, we are now trading globally, so we can't afford to see ourselves through a pigeonhole anymore, and restrict our choices.


However we can never merge the sexes and create one gender. Procreation happens between male and female and that's that. This doesn't take away from the fact that I take pride in my image and will always do so. I iron my shirt for 10 minute and don't want anyone else doing it for me. I'm pedantic about my dress code and it is purely a personal thing, nothing to do with any tags that people might attach.

SM: The BLINK man is constantly changing. I believe the ideal is one who is well refined with a bit of grit. Our sons need to get what it means to be a balanced man and get to a point where it's okay to be who and what you are, without being defined as a Metrosexual, Ubersexual or whatever else.

Conversations was shot on location at Lekgotla, Shop 10, Nelson Mandela Square, Sandton City. (011) 884 9555 

Appendix 2

Muhlenberg, D. (2006) 'Tough Guys', *GQ Magazine*, May 2006, 58-62.

A black and white photograph of Muhammad Ali in a boxing ring. He is shirtless, wearing white boxing trunks and white gloves. He is in a celebratory pose, with his right arm raised and his mouth open in a shout. The background is dark and out of focus.

■ Ultimate tough guy
Muhammed Ali stands
over Sonny Liston, Maine
USA, 25 May, 1965.

'I done **wrassled with an alligator,**
I done tussled with a whale, handcuffed lightnin', threw
thunder in jail. Only last week I murdered a rock, injured a stone,
hospitalised a brick, I'm so mean I make medicine sick'
—Muhammed Ali

TOUGH GUYS

NO EXCUSES, NO APOLOGIES, NOT NOW, NOT EVER

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, and now the moment you've all been waiting for... um, no, not really, but in case you were wondering, the latest media hyped term, fresh from the diseased imaginings of a trend forecaster is — the übersexual.

An übersexual is supposed to be a hybrid of Neanderthal man and the metrosexual, and comes from the same little lady that coined that term for a straight man who has all the characteristics of a gay — metrosexual. Marian Salzman says that with the advent of the übersexual it's now okay to be a man. Well thanks Marian, but nobody needs to tell us that.

As men we're able to change tyres, drink beer for breakfast and kill insects armed only with a stokie, which is fine, but why be just another guy if you have the potential to reach tough guy status? The boys of my generation grew up with an almost homoerotic devotion to the roughnecks we suckled off from the glass teat. *A-Team*, *Airwolf*, *MacGyver*, *Magnum*, *Indiana Jones*, *Rambo*, *Rocky* and *The Terminator*, their bravado was unsurpassed. Today's TV has *Queer Eye For The Straight Guy*, *Everybody Loves Raymond* and *Will and Grace*.

Chuck Norris is a tough guy, a man's man who doesn't take no for an answer and can settle most disputes with a round house kick. Scientists recently discovered that his tears can cure cancer; problem is Chuck doesn't cry. David Beckham is a ponce who cries freely and easily. He finds shopping therapeutic and his tears are pure buttermilk. David is no tough guy, he's softer than a contact lens. So where Marian can be credited for inventing the term metrosexual, Victoria Beckham is responsible for the prototype.

Now this is in no way a metrophobic attack, our ad reps still use the term metrosexual when trying to get advertising for this very magazine. Don't get us wrong, we at *GQ* believe that smelling nice is great, looking good is smart and are grateful that most of you don't wear white socks with black shoes anymore. However, while

guiding you it seems as if a lot of you were robbed of your manliness. Style is important, but style sans substance is like a monkey in silk — still just a monkey.

Being a tough guy is about attitude. Muhammed Ali said: 'I done wrassled with an alligator, I done tussled with a whale, handcuffed lightning', threw thunder in jail. Only last week I murdered a rock, injured a stone, hospitalised a brick, I'm so mean I make medicine sick.' Ali walked what he talked, a man of ideals who stood up for what he believed in. When asked to be the face of erectile dysfunction he sent a shaky uppercut straight to the Pfizer rep. Being a tough guy is about values.

A tough guy is able to get through life without ever becoming addicted to his vice, because rehab is for quitters. Second-hand smoke, political correctness and the latest celebrity coupling mean nothing to him.

A tough guy cares about his woman, his mates, guns, beer, engines and fighting stories. A tough guy has absolute confidence in his masculinity and is proud to be a man. He does man things, like woodwork and stuff.

Although positive towards women a tough guy doesn't need to seek their approval; why should he feel guilty for being the stronger sex?

Cherishing his 'cherry' with masculinity, he knows how to make his woman feel good.

The tough guy wasn't invented by marketers, or made in a gym, nor is he the product of Hollywood. The tough guy is the embodiment of something deep inside man — desire, guts, vision. Masculinity. Testosterone. He has last-minute stamina, skill and will. The tough guy views any challenge as an opportunity to better himself and extends an irreverent middle finger to the easy way out. □ **Dylan Muhlenberg**

■ Sylvester Stallone greased-up as John Rambo.



Steve McQueen

■ Chuck Norris



■ Harrison Ford is Indiana Jones.



MAN OR MOUSE? OR CHUCK!

1. The thing that scares you most is:

- A** Commitment ☐
- B** Not climbing all of the seven summits before you die ☐
- C** Penny Heyns' shoulders ☐
- D** Swimming in a pilchard-infused sealskin leotard off Robben Island ☐

2. The only time you'll ever scream, 'It's my song' and act out the lyrics, is when they play:

- A** I'm A Little Teapot ☐
- B** Survivor's Eye Of The Tiger ☐
- C** The Rocky Horror Picture Show's infamous Time Warp ☐
- D** The Haka ☐

3. You don't leave home without:

- A** You haven't left home since your mom confiscated your plastic bubble ☐
- B** Your multitool and a GPS ☐
- C** Your manbag ☐
- D** Setting several spring-loaded bear traps and rigging the tripwire-activated shotgun at the front door ☐

4. Your nickname is:

- A** Dangerous Dave ☐
- B** Dirty Sanchez ☐
- C** The Gregster ☐
- D** Nobody dares take your name in vain ☐

5. There's a six pack and no bottle opener, you:

- A** Don't drink them because it's not lite beer ☐
- B** Use the leverage-bottle-popping-system to get through the first five and spatula the last ☐
- C** Drink the Chardonnay sitting in the fridge ☐
- D** Use your eye socket ☐

6. Your hero is:

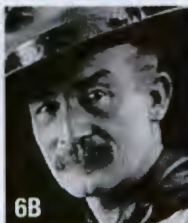
- A** Woody Allen ☐
- B** Baden Powell ☐
- C** Chuck Norris ☐
- D** Bruce Willis ☐

7. Your perfect holiday is:

- A** Your couch and the complete series of *Will And Grace* ☐
- B** Anything that allows you to tick something off your '1001 Things to Do Before I'm Dead' list ☐
- C** Valley of the Waves at Sun City ☐
- D** Subway surfing wearing your fake Muslim fundamentalist beard while chanting Koranic verses ☐



6A



6B



6C



6D

Mostly A's
You're softer than a newborn baby wearing a moisturiser. You are Nathaniel.
Mostly B's
You're tough like leather and as hard as a really old person's toenails. You are Mike Tyson speaking in his Big Boy voice.
Mostly C's
You're as hard as Pete's piel. You've got hair on your chest, but then so does Arnold Geerds.
Mostly D's
Good God, man! You don't need a Chuck Norris!

8. The closest you've come to death was:

- A** A freak, septic paper cut you picked up in the office, which was exacerbated by keyboard gunk. You almost lost your space-key digit ☐
- B** While bow-hunting a rogue elephant called Smaug in the Gonarezhou National Park, the fletching on your lucky black arrow fell off mid-flight, forcing you to take refuge in a hole with an amorous honey badger called Bilbo ☐
- C** This one time, at band camp, you ran out of toilet paper and you had to use a leaf. It was poison ivy ☐
- D** Kitesurfing off Bali, you had to ride a tsunami to safety ☐

9. The hardest thing you've ever had to do:

- A** Was washing the dishes without your yellow gloves ☐
- B** Was eat your pack of huskies on the 1000 mile Yukon Quest ☐
- C** Was choosing who to support in the 2003 Rugby World Cup final between the Ozzies and the Poms ☐
- D** Was cutting your wife's rope half way up Everest when she jeopardised the group. The fact she'd been shagging the sherpa made it easier ☐

10. Fear Factor...

- A** Makes you scream like a little girl and hide behind your quilted pillow ☐
- B** Is what you face every day when you get out of bed ☐
- C** Is an interesting insight into the lengths good-looking, dumb people go to for cash. Prostitution would be more lucrative and less painful. This you know ☐
- D** Is child's play. Scalpings, 2nd-degree burns and Parktown-prawn dinners were all pillars of your formative years ☐

11. At your funeral, they will:

- A** Funeral? How can The Eliminator die? Wait till I get the cheat sheets for this tricky new Quake. Bwahahaha... mortals! ☐
- B** Stuff your tomb with pets, girlfriends and anything else you're attached to, have a 21 000 gun Soweto salute and erect a revolving golden statue of your likeness for the nation's eternal adoration ☐
- C** Piss on your grave and sell your spare parts to med students ☐
- D** Have to confirm you really are dead, 'cos you came back the last two times ☐

12. You're already damn near perfect and indestructible, but if you could be granted one superpower it would be:

- A** Flower arranging ☐
- B** To be able to understand your wife's lexicon of grunts and moods ☐
- C** X-ray vision. Hey, the Gregster needs to know what kind of weaponry them sensual terrorist babes are packing! ☐
- D** To skin a honey badger with your eyes. Damn critters are tougher than biltong with the fur on ☐



13. Your earliest memory is:

- A** Your parents arguing over whether to raise you as a male or a female ☐
- B** Chewing through your own umbilical cord ☐
- C** The smack the doctor gave you, ouch, it still stings ☐
- D** Clawing your way out of the abortion bucket ☐

14. Steak is:

- A** Ooh no, red meat irritates your bowels ☐
- B** The name of your favourite pit-bull ☐
- C** 250g fillet with hollandaise sauce ☐
- D** Big, bloody and something you've just killed ☐

15. A threatening gang of youths approach, so you:

- A** Trip your girlfriend as a diversion then hightail it out of there ☐
- B** Display every Kung-Fu position you know from the Spitting-Cobra to the Crazy-Monkey, then go straight for their testicles with your teeth ☐
- C** Shriek, bite, pinch and bitchslap ☐
- D** Break the first guy's face, then use his jawbone to beat off the rest. Later, you mount it with the rest of your trophy kills above the fireplace ☐

Appendix 3

Andriesse, A. (2006) 'Pablo and the Charlie Factory', *FHM*, June 2006, 68-74.

Pablo AND THE CHARLIE FACTORY

WORDS: AMIR ANDRIESSE

Pablo Escobar was the Willie Wonka of cocaine. He turned Colombia into the main supplier of coke to the world. Of course, he was dead by 44

YOU FOOLS! THIS IS NOT my son, you've shot the wrong man!"

Hermilda, Pablo Escobar's mother, looked triumphantly at the policemen standing next to the corpse she was pointing at, the corpse that was not her son. But the policemen told her to step aside to make room for a stretcher that was coming down from the rooftop. On it was a barefoot man wearing jeans rolled up at the ankles and a blue sweater. The blood on his face was sticky in his full black beard. This man was indeed Hermilda's son. Pablo's mother felt pain and anger, but also relief. "Now he's at peace," she said. "At last."

Pablo Emilio Escobar Gaviria was born on 1 December 1949. He was born into a family that, for those times in rural Colombia, could be called middle

class – although Pablo in later life led everyone to believe he was from a poor family. He dropped out of school when he was 17 to have more time for his newfound hobby: smoking pot. Colombian weed was the best in the world, and it was cheap and easy to get. Pablo was a heavy toker till the day he died. He would get up at one or two in the afternoon and begin smoking immediately – more often than not staying stoned for the whole day. Escobar's criminal career started with petty crimes such as selling forged lottery tickets and illegal cigarettes and the odd mugging. He was short (not even 1,7m), chubby and had a big, round head with thick black hair and a grubby, bushy moustache.

But he also had bigger *cojones* than his friends. Maybe it was the dope, but Pablo Escobar had the ability to stay exceptionally calm when all those

around him started to panic. He used this to impress his friends and partners in crime, but especially to inspire fear in them. Around this time his violent and often deadly side also started to emerge. When someone owed him money, he arranged for them to be kidnapped. If the family couldn't or wouldn't pay the ransom, he simply killed his hostage. Sometimes he even killed them when the ransom was paid – just to make a point.

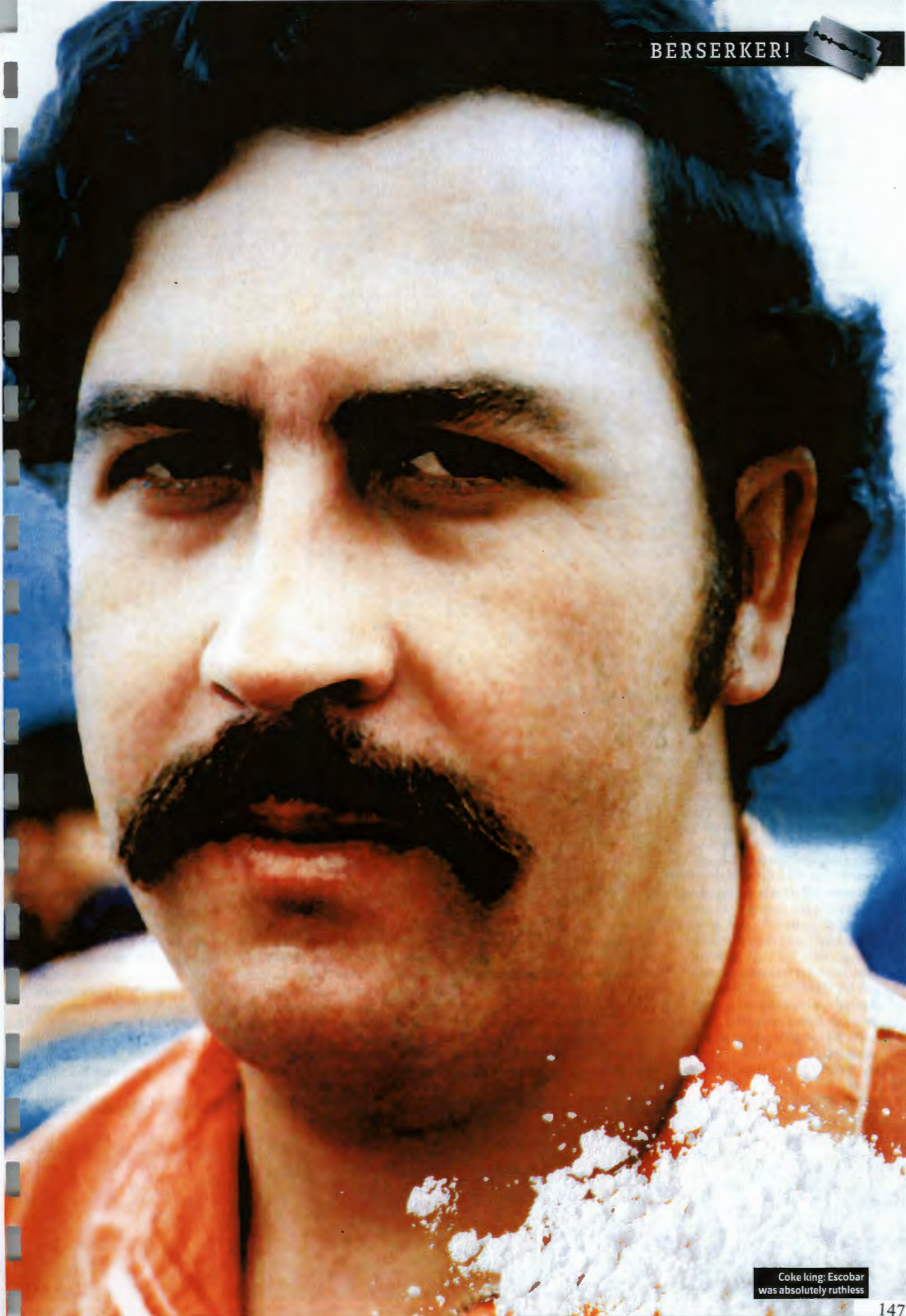
HOSTILE TAKEOVER

In the Seventies the weed generation discovered cocaine and Pablo Escobar laid the foundations of the drug empire that would make him one of the richest men in the world. At one time his daily profits were estimated at one million dollars. He built his empire together with the Ochoa brothers, Carlos Lehder and José Rodríguez Gacha. The way he gained control was typical of his style. In ▷



Escobar's body on display soon after his death

BERSERKER!



Coke king: Escobar was absolutely ruthless

In the mid-Seventies Escobar was sending about 60kg of coke to Miami once or twice a year. Pablo contacted Fabio Restrepo, one of the first cocaine bosses in Medellín, Colombia, and offered to sell him some uncut coke. He showed up looking like a street hoodlum, in an oversized T-shirt, a pair of faded jeans rolled up at the ankles and worn-out sneakers. The apartment where Pablo arranged for them to meet was filthy, with piles of clothes everywhere. Restrepo bought the 14kg that Escobar dug out of a grubby drawer and laughed scornfully at the little fat guy. Two months later Restrepo was murdered and Pablo Escobar was the new boss of Medellín. The locals loved Escobar. He gave them jobs and a good salary. One of



the neighbourhoods in Medellín became known as Barrio Pablo (Pablo town) and residents would invite him to cut ribbons and kiss babies. He was the town's hero, the man who had put Medellín on the map. Pablo lived like the drug lords lived in *Miami Vice* and he wasn't ashamed of it. In 1979 he built a mansion on a plot of almost 30 square kilometres. The land alone cost him about \$63 million and the spending had only just started. He built an airstrip, six swimming pools, a couple of lakes and roads. He imported elephants, zebras and other exotic animals. In front of the mansion was a sofa full of bullet holes that Pablo claimed had once belonged to the notorious Bonnie and Clyde.

The big hacienda was an absurdly extravagant way for Pablo to show he had made it. And he wasn't afraid to

'PABLO'S HACIENDA HAD SIX POOLS, LAKES, LIONS AND ZEBRAS'

show how he'd made it either. Above the gate to his estate he mounted the aeroplane that had carried his first drugs shipment, as a sort of a trophy.

EXPOSED

But Escobar wanted even more. It wasn't enough for him to be loved by "his people" and to have more money than he knew what to do with. He

wanted even more status, and he wanted to get it by buying a political career. In 1982 he was "elected" to the Colombian congress as an alternate representative for the New Liberal Party. This automatically got Escobar diplomatic status and a diplomatic passport. Now he could finally achieve his big dream of travelling to the USA, to sit on the porch of his huge estate in

Florida and even take a guided tour of the White House.

But when Escobar wanted to take his place in congress, his political dream fell to pieces. Bogotá was not Medellín and his fellow congressmen knew very well how he had made his fortune and how he'd bought his place there. They protested it vigorously. Newly appointed justice minister Rodrigo Lara tried to expose Pablo in every way he could and made attempts to lay charges for bribery and taking dirty money for a political campaign. Pablo's diplomatic passport was revoked and he was kicked out of the party amid a lot of song and dance.

Escobar was furious, and his pride was hurt. Three months later Lara was

TIMELINE

The life and times of Pablo Escobar

- 1949** Pablo Escobar is born on 1 December.
- 1967** Pablo leaves school.
- 1969** Pablo in prison for car theft.
- 1971** Pablo kidnaps hated Colombian industrialist Diego Echavarría and kills him, even after the ransom is paid. He makes himself loved in Medellín.
- 1975** Pablo then kills Fabio Restrepo and

- takes over control of the massive Medellín cocaine business.
- 1976** Pablo marries 15-year-old Maria Victoria. Because of her age, special dispensation is needed from the bishop. But not even the church dares to deny Escobar.
- 1976** Two weeks after the wedding, police find 39kg of cocaine in the spare tyre of Pablo's pick-up truck. The judge is bribed

- and the officers who arrested him are killed. Pablo is acquitted.
- 1978** Pablo is elected as alternate city councillor in Medellín.
- 1979** Pablo builds Hacienda los Nápoles. It's an absurdly extravagant mansion.
- 1982** Pablo becomes an alternate congressman.
- 1983** The first time he takes his seat in

- congress Pablo is disrespected by his peers.
- 1984** Justice minister Lara, frontrunner in the crusade against Pablo, is murdered.
- 1985** Pablo offers to turn himself in if the government promises not to extradite him to the USA. Bogotá refuses.
- 1985** Rebels of guerilla group M19 storm the Palace of Justice in Bogotá: 95 killed.
- 1986** The supreme court of Colombia

'ESCOBAR BOMBED AN AIRLINER AND KILLED 110 PEOPLE'

Colombia then a jail cell in the USA," he was fond of saying. He fought the extradition agreement that the government had been making with the United States with everything he had. Following Lara's murder, 30 judges who had had something to do with formulating the agreement were killed. In November 1985 members of the guerrilla group M19 stormed the Palace of Justice in Bogotá – they were paid by Escobar. At the end of the siege 95 justice employees were killed. Among

was looking like a dead cert to become the next president of Colombia. He didn't miss a chance to tell his audiences that once in office he would declare war on Pablo Escobar and the Medellín Cartel. So Escobar had him killed too. It was with the assassination attempt on his successor, César Gaviria, however, that he made a crucial mistake. He bombed a commercial airliner that was supposed to have Gaviria on it. In the end, 110 people were killed in the blast, among them two Americans – but Gaviria was not on board. With this act of terrorism, Pablo became not only a target for the Colombians, but also public enemy number one for the USA.

In the first four months after Galán's death, 20 drug runners were extradited to the USA. And with the help of his American friends, Colombian president Virgilio Barco Vargas created special police units. One of them, the "Search Bloc", had only one goal – to find and arrest the big bosses of the Medellín cartel, namely Gacha, the Ochoa Brothers and of course Pablo Escobar. The unit was headed by Colonel Hugo Martínez. In the first two weeks of its existence 30 of his 200 men were killed. Their identities were kept secret, but still Escobar managed to get to them and execute them one by one. Keeping a secret from Pablo Escobar proved to be impossible; every taxi driver, every paperboy was loyal to the drug lord.

It was war in Colombia. Every night there were explosions in Bogotá. Some small, some big. Some as a warning (in one night 24 small bombs exploded in front of supermarkets, hotels and restaurants, all empty because of the curfew), but more often as an attack on the government. A 500kg bus bomb was detonated outside the

Los Pepes took the fight to Escobar, torching his cars



Escobar with his wife Maria Victoria and son Juan Pablo

...d. The bulletproof vest he'd got as a gift from the American ambassador lay by his body on the back seat of his car. But it wouldn't have done him any good anyway. He had been shot from close range, with seven bullets from a

machine gun. In an instant, Pablo Escobar went from being a local hero to public enemy number one. The hunt for the drug kingpin was on.

Pablo's greatest fear was to be extradited to the USA. "Better a grave in

them were 11 of the country's 24 supreme-court judges.

PUBLIC ENEMY NO 1

Luis Galán, the man who had kicked Escobar out of the New Liberal party,

...ered by all the killings – declares the extradition agreement with the USA unconstitutional. A couple of days later president Barco – pressured by Washington – signs a new agreement.

1987 Associate Carlos Lehder is caught and extradited to the USA. He is later convicted and sentenced to life plus 135 years.

1989 Luis Galán, certain to be Colombia's

next president, is murdered by the Cartel.

1989 A commercial aircraft that was to carry Galán successor Gaviria is bombed out of the sky – 110 people are killed, but Gaviria isn't on board.

1989 Police kill drug boss José Gacha.

1990 Newly elected president Gaviria offers the Medellín Cartel reduced sentences in exchange for their surrender.

1991 All three of the Ochoa brothers – Pablo's partners in crime – turn themselves in.

1991 When a law declares extradition illegal, Pablo Escobar turns himself in – to be "imprisoned" in the plush La Catedral.

1992 President Gaviria orders Escobar to be transferred to a normal prison, but Escobar simply walks out and disappears.

1993 After another bombing by Escobar,

there's an answer in the form of Los Pepes – a civilian militia that promises to destroy Escobar, his accomplices and his assets.

1993 Pablo's brother Roberto turns himself in – terrified of Los Pepes.

1993 On 2 December a day after his 44th birthday, Pablo Escobar is killed by agents of the Search Bloc.



A unit was set up with the sole purpose of dealing with Escobar

No bounty was enough

SE BUSCAN



PABLO ESCOBAR
CAVILLA



GOZALO RODRIGUEZ
GACA

RECOMPENSA
\$ 100'000.000

headquarters of the Colombian secret service, killing 70 and leaving hundreds wounded.

IMPRISONED... BUT NOT REALLY

In May 1980 César Gaviria was inaugurated as Colombia's new president. One of the first things he did was offer the drug cartels a deal to stop the violence. More than 1 500 people had been killed in the war with Escobar and - some way or another - it had to end. Gaviria's election promise that there would be no negotiating with criminals was cast aside and he offered the drug czars mild sentences if they gave themselves up.

On 19 June 1991 the Colombian parliament passed a law that made it

unconstitutional to extradite Colombian citizens to other countries. A few hours later Pablo Escobar's private helicopter landed on the grounds of "La Catedral", the prison he had built for himself. Fifty armed guards in new blue uniforms stared at the drug lord as he entered the building. He walked up to the warden and took his 9mm Sig-Sauer handgun from his ankle holster. He then removed the bullets from the gun one by one and let them fall to the ground - something he had clearly practised in front of the mirror.

From La Catedral Escobar could finally rebuild his empire, and it needed some restoration. In the previous 18 months a lot of his foot soldiers had been killed. Around 60 000kg of cocaine had been seized and most of

the infrastructure of his empire was shattered. Now that he finally had some peace and quiet, he could put things right again.

La Catedral wasn't a bad place to be. There was a bar, a football field and a sauna. Escobar even had secluded cabanas built on the premises, where he and his fellow "prisoners" could take female visitors without being disturbed. La Catedral also wasn't a prison in the sense that Pablo was locked up. He regularly attended football matches in Medellín and celebrated the first anniversary of his imprisonment in a local nightclub.

All this made president Gaviria furious, of course. He was constantly having to explain how the biggest criminal in the country lived in luxury and could come and go as he pleased. When Pablo executed two "disloyal" employees within the walls of La Catedral - they were hanged upside down and set on fire - he went too far. On 21 July 1992 Gaviria sent the army into La Catedral to move Escobar to a normal prison in Bogotá. But the army was

afraid to go in and waited until the Colombian special forces came and stormed La Catedral. When the smoke finally cleared, Pablo Escobar had miraculously escaped. He had just walked through a cordon of Colombian soldiers. He was unarmed, but nobody dared to stop him.

AN EYE FOR AN EYE

With Pablo on the loose, the game began all over again. The Americans were again invited to help out - with even fewer restrictions this time - and Colonel Martínez and the Search Bloc were put back on the case. Escobar also jump-started a new terror campaign. In the first six months after his escape, a total of 65 Colombian policemen were killed and not a week went by without a car bomb going off somewhere in the country.

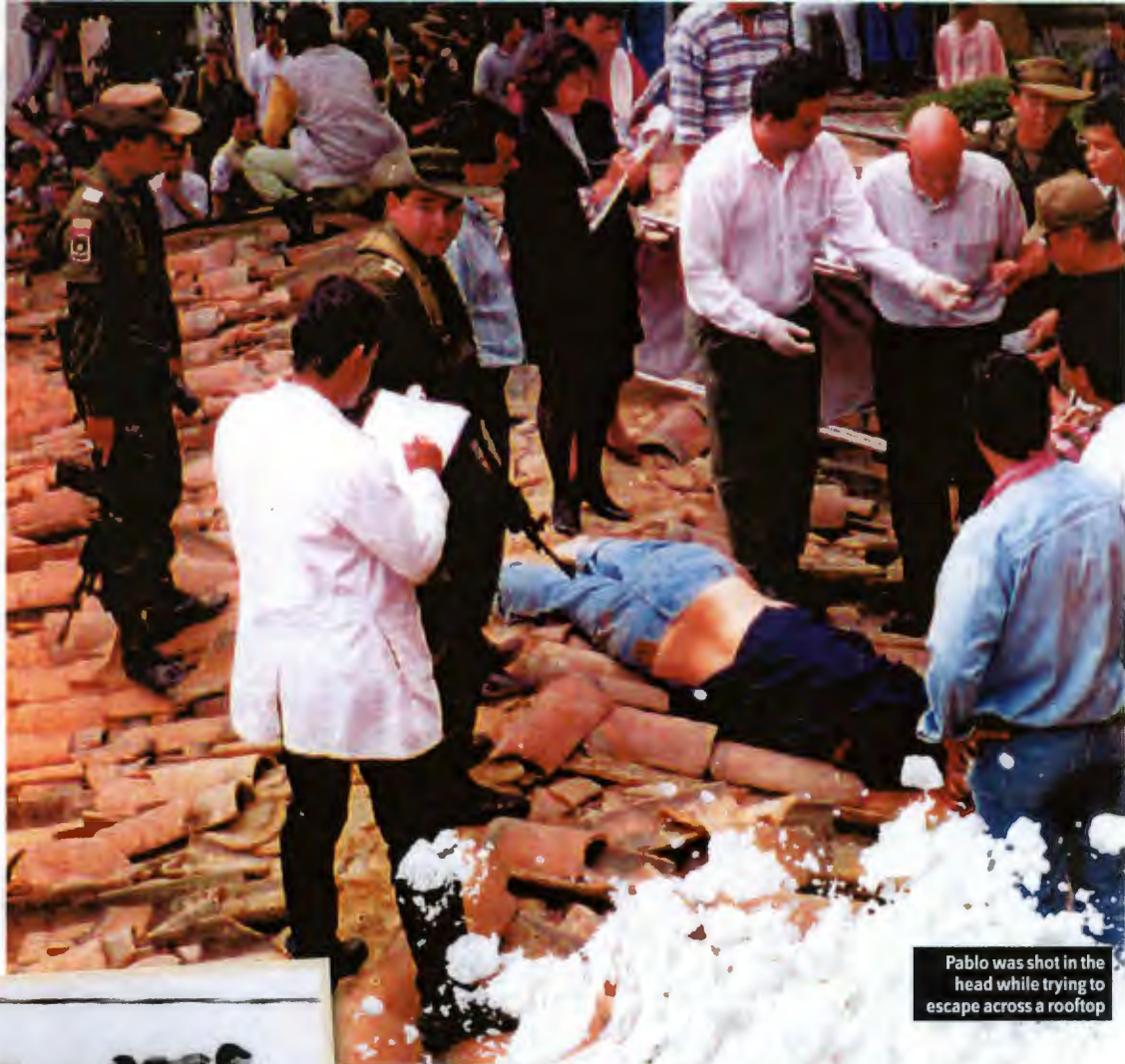
But when a bomb exploded in January 1993 next to a bookshop, killing 21 and wounding 70, among them lots of children, finally someone had had enough. There came a response to Escobar - in language he could

'TWO DISLOYAL INMATES WERE HUNG UP AND SET ON FIRE'

BERSERKER!

understand. The apartment building where Pablo's family lived was destroyed by two car bombs and his mother's hacienda was burnt to the ground. Another car bomb exploded in front of a house owned by Escobar, wounding his mother and aunt. A group calling itself Los Pepes claimed responsibility.

Los Pepes claimed it was a civilian militia. The letters of its name in Spanish were an acronym for People Persecuted by Pablo Escobar. Los Pepes announced in the media that from then on every attack on innocent citizens by Escobar would be matched by them. They also stated that their goal was the total destruction of Pablo Escobar, his accomplices and his assets – and they put their money where their mouths were. In the first two weeks of their existence Los Pepes killed 37 of Pablo's accomplices, blew up Escobar's properties and burnt down his collection of classic cars and his art collection. One by one, his partners in crime were taken out. Pablo's attorneys also weren't safe from harm.



Pablo was shot in the head while trying to escape across a rooftop



Police surround Escobar's final hideout

'IT WAS THAT PHONE CALL TO HIS SON THAT WOULD PROVE FATAL'

When they got scared, three of his most prominent lawyers publicly resigned. One of them, José Lozano, made the mistake of secretly working for Escobar after his resignation; his body was found riddled with 25 bullets in the streets of Medellín. In the following months, 20 more of Pablo's employees were killed, among them his brother-in-law and his cousin. In July his brother Roberto's prize stallion was kidnapped. The stallion Tremonto (Earthquake) was worth millions. Three weeks later the horse was found, tied to a tree south of Medellín. He'd been sterilised.

The beginning of the end came in October 1993, when Los Pepes attacked Escobar's family's block of flats with grenades. Escobar's wife and children, terrified by this attack, flew to Frankfurt to ask for political asylum in Germany. Escobar knew that if he managed to get his family

abroad, it would be a lot harder for the Search Bloc to find him – he would have no more reason to surface. But their request for political asylum was rejected by the Germans – even an attempted bribe didn't help the Escobars, much to their astonishment. Back in Colombia, in an ironic twist of fate, the Escobars asked the government to protect them from Los Pepes. The government obliged, and they were put up in a hotel, where the Search Bloc waited patiently for Pablo to call his distressed family. And he didn't disappoint them.

THE END

On 2 December 1993, a day after his 44th birthday, Pablo Escobar forgot for a moment that the police were listening in on his conversation with his son. He spoke for a little too long and



Escobar's grave

even promised to call him back later that day. It was that phone call that would prove fatal. When he called back, the Search Bloc had his location pinpointed within minutes. But there was no drug lord in the office building that they raided. For a minute they thought that Escobar had again got the better of them. But it turned out that their signal had been jammed by nearby power cables. Pablo carried on talking to his son, and Hugo Martínez Jnr, son of the colonel in charge, and the head of the eavesdropping unit of the Search Bloc, was able to recalibrate his instruments and follow a new signal

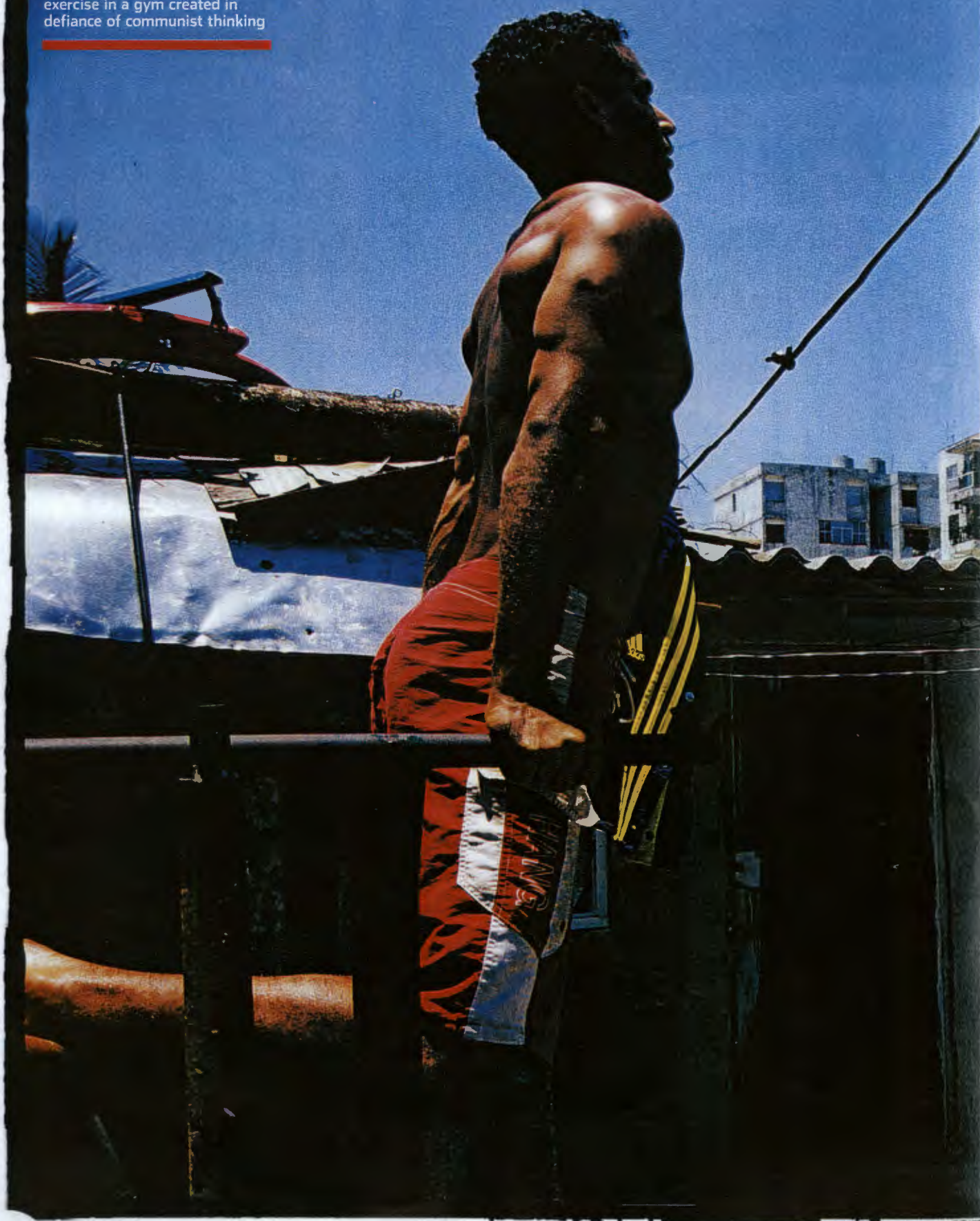
to a simple, inconspicuous house in the neighbourhood. When he looked up at a window, he couldn't believe his eyes. Between the half-closed curtains he saw Pablo Escobar looking out at the street below. Pablo saw him too and hung up.

Martínez expected an army of hired guns to be holed up with Pablo, so he called all the back-up he could get. His men were there in no time and surrounded the house. But inside were only Escobar and his bodyguard Limón. When the army stormed the house, Limón jumped through an open window onto the rooftop of the house next door. Everyone opened fire and his bullet-riddled body fell off the roof, to the ground. Pablo also started shooting and eventually also jumped on the roof, looking for a way out. On the rooftop he was hit by two bullets. One in his knee, one just below his shoulder blade. Then Colombia's biggest criminal and one of the most wanted men in the world went down for the last time, a bullet hitting him in the head, near his ear. The king of coke was dead. **FHM**

Appendix 4

Green, J. (2006) "Cuban Muscle Crisis", *Men's Health Magazine*, May 2006, 142-147.

We can work it out: 10km east of Havana, in Cojimar, men exercise in a gym created in defiance of communist thinking





Cuban Muscle Crisis

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHS JONATHAN GREEN

With limited food, funds and resources, and a government that looks upon their sport with disdain, Cuba's maverick bodybuilders have to work harder than most for their physiques. Meet Cojimar's outlaw muscle men

“T

his body,” splits the bronzed, hulking figure standing over me, “has not been made with steroids or protein

drinks.” He angrily flexes the huge muscles in his arms and shoulders and surveys his puffed-out chest with pride. “You people use drugs to get this,” he snarls through the wet heat. “You cheat.” With that, he unfurls himself and begins bench-pressing 136kg in short, irritable thrusts on a machine that was an iron gate in a previous life.

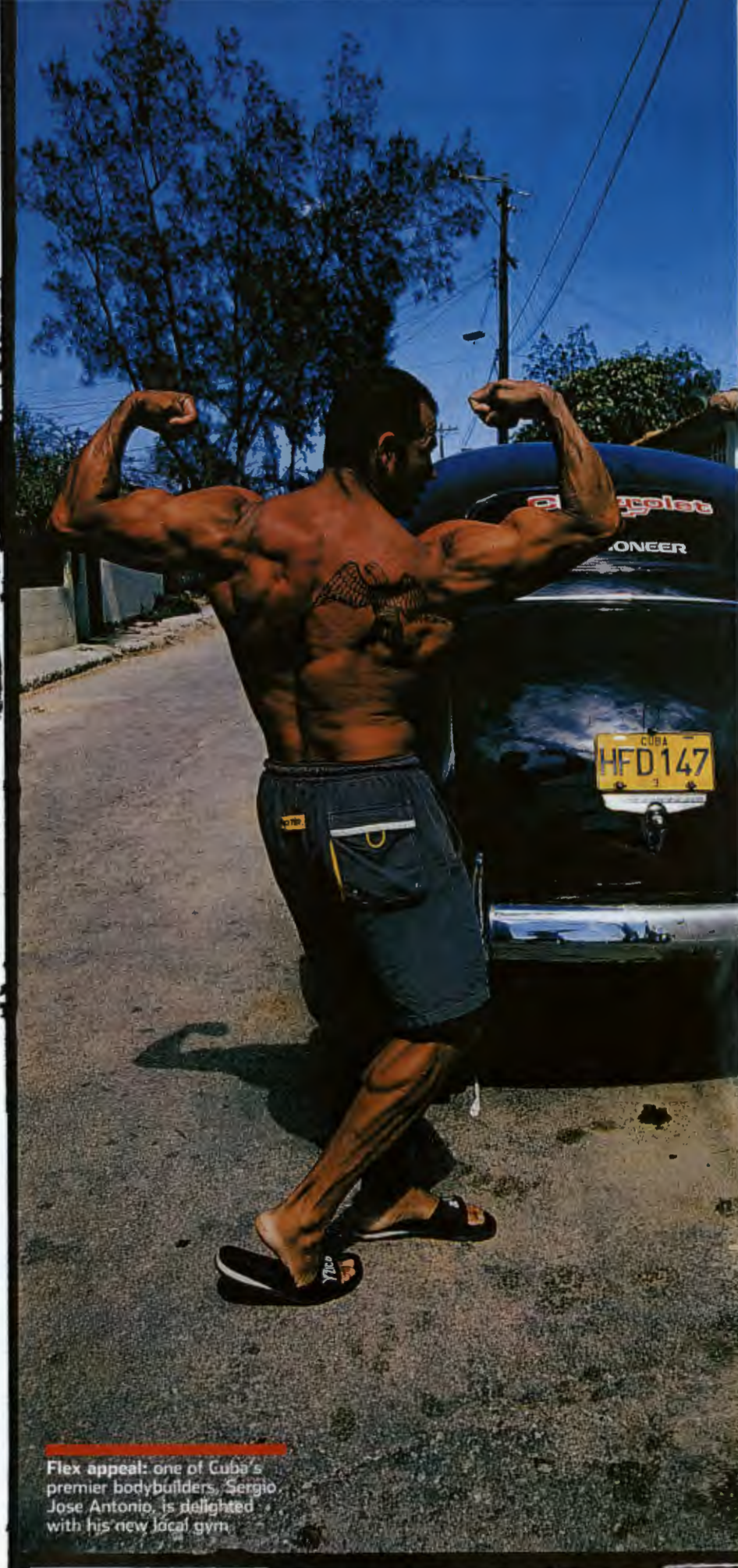
Champion Cuban bodybuilder Sergio Jose Antonio has bitterly nurtured these grievances for years. His frustration stems from the fact that he (mistakenly) regards all bodybuilders in places like the US and the UK, cultures which I represent, as solely pumped-up on steroids — definitely not available in Cuba.

We are standing in the Ernest Hemingway Community Gym in the village of Cojimar, 10km east of Havana. It’s named after the writer who kept his boat, *The Pilar*, here for fishing trips. Today the country still clings to Castro’s communist dream and continues to suffer under the crippling US blockade. And since the collapse of the Soviet Union (Cuba’s main sponsor) it’s a country where the average monthly wage is around R60, cars are held together with coat hangers and a 1980 Lada will cost you about R6 000.

In the gym, hidden from the sun under an asbestos roof, machines are bolted to a dusty floor. At first glance they look no different from those in any gym — until you look closer. Metal is welded in odd places, the machine cables are coated with thick layers of grease and the weights are lumpy and rust-disfigured under layers of treacly black paint.

Almost every machine has been salvaged from a rubbish dump. The pec dec is constructed from steel pillars and electrical cable. The chin-up bar is made from security railings and the footplate of the leg-press and hack-squat machine looks like the floor of a truck. The rowing machine has evidently been fashioned from the shell of a bus.

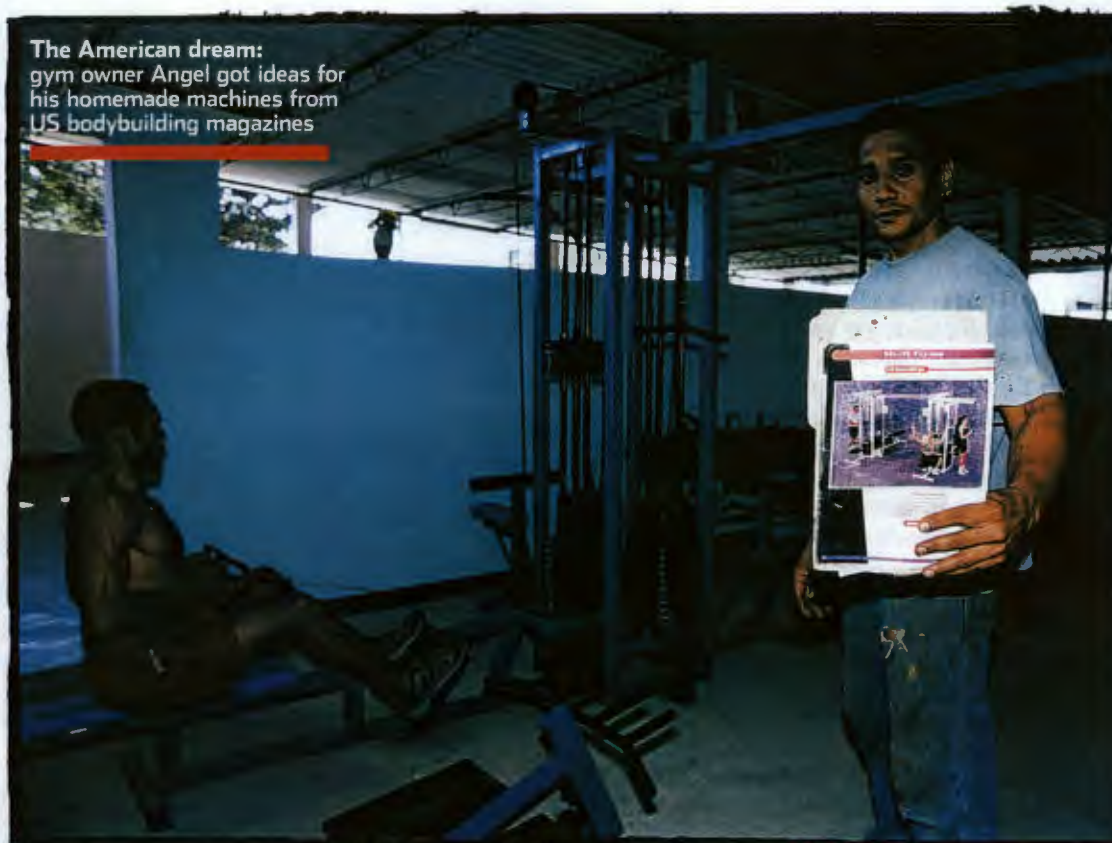
“In everything from food to the machines, here in Cuba we have to make



Flex appeal: one of Cuba's premier bodybuilders, Sergio Jose Antonio, is delighted with his new local gym

Muscle Against the Odds

The American dream: gym owner Angel got ideas for his homemade machines from US bodybuilding magazines



THE GYM MACHINES HAVE ALMOST ALL BEEN SALVAGED FROM A RUB-BISH DUMP



Power house: Sergio in front of the gym built on waste land between flats



Machines reborn: one man's scrap is another man's afternoon workout

do if we want to work out," says Angel Delgado Montesino, 35, a former Havana bodybuilding champion and the owner of the gym.

He decided to build the gym three years ago. But in a country where bodybuilding is looked upon as a decadent sport glorifying the individual as opposed to society as a whole, there were many obstacles. History wasn't on his side: at the 1961 Pan American games Cuban bodybuilder Sergio Olivia, along with the whole Cuban weightlifting team, fled to the US Embassy, where they were all granted political asylum. Sergio went on to become a star on the US bodybuilding circuit.

But in Cuba, Angel, together with a couple of his friends — Roberto, an Al Pacino lookalike; Lazaro, a thickset gentle giant; and Lester, a rubbery, gangly student the others gently ridicule — set about realising their dream.

They had to win the approval of the communist committee that runs their housing estate — grim, mildewed blocks like something out of Warsaw in 1946. After many entreaties, they were given a patch of waste ground between buildings and they began to scrimp, save, beg and borrow to get what they needed.

They built it brick by brick. Since a special permit is needed to buy breeze blocks in Cuba, they made their own at a cost of R1.20 per brick. Slowly, over three long years, it came together.

Angel is a welder so he built machines from scrap metal. "I looked at pictures from US bodybuilding magazines and engineered everything from those," he explains, as he proudly gives me a tour of the gym. The padded seats are covered with blue vinyl at the hefty cost of R70 per metre. His girlfriend, in tight lycra and with a mane of glossy hair, runs an aerobics class next door where women from the estate bop to Cuban salsa greats.

When I visit, the gym has been open for just a few weeks. They've painted murals on the walls of Ernest Hemingway and righteous quotes from Fidel Castro, Cuban writer Jose Marti and third US President Thomas Jefferson, all in maroon, lapidary copperplate.

The gang is excited. "It's very hard to practise this sport in Cuba," says Roberto. "You need good food, medicine and supplements to do it — all things that we just can't afford here." He has a well-developed

chest and arms, but his friends like to make fun of his slender legs, which they joke "would snap like matchsticks".

"Look," explains Roberto, "I only have money to buy food for a certain amount of repetitions. I can't afford to work my legs. And I need new shoes," he says, pointing to the Adidas trainers on his feet held together with tape. "But it would take me all year to save enough to afford them."

For Sergio, 39, who works as a security guard, it has been a long road to achieving the Charles Atlas look on limited resources. "Look what I have to eat," he says when I visit him in his two-room home. His daughters play at his feet; on a table is a huge bowl of spaghetti in a steel bowl, full of carbohydrates but no protein. On the walls of his home are cheap prints of him in various poses along with certificates from bodybuilding tournaments he has won, notably in Havana.

Like most, he can only afford precious protein like fish, eggs or chicken once a week. When he won the Havana bodybuilding competition last year, he was faced with a crucial decision two days before. "I had saved up to buy fish," he says. "But then my daughter got sick. I had to choose between eating fish for the competition or giving it to my sick daughter. Of course, I gave it to her."

Few understand his dedication. "People don't like bodybuilding here," he says. "They like boxing and baseball. They think bodybuilding is vain and that I'm just an empty man." His wife, too, gets flak: "My girlfriends say Sergio must have a small dick, that's why he does it." Sergio laughs good-naturedly. His wife flushes.

The new gym in town has been a godsend. Before, Sergio would have to go to Havana every day, a journey which would take him hours on unreliable public transport.



**"I HAD
TO CHOOSE
BETWEEN EATING
FISH FOR THE
COMPETITION
OR GIVING IT TO
MY SICK DAUGHTER..."**

Muscle Against the Odds



Iron man: gym owner Angel is a welder by trade - a useful skill when it comes to constructing new gym equipment



Pump it up: despite problems, the gym built from scrap is becoming more and more popular

A few days after we speak, however, a huge blow is dealt: Angel has been forced to close the gym down because a Communist Party member took exception to the Thomas Jefferson quote on the wall. Roberto is visibly upset. Entrance to the gym has to be suspended until further notice. A little later, I pay another visit and find Roberto outside, dejectedly kicking loose stones across the ground. "Angel is smoking cigarettes all the time and can't sleep," he says. "We don't know what will happen."

Fortunately, just another couple of days later, the offending quote has been neatly painted over and the gym is back in business. When we speak again it's clear that Sergio couldn't be happier. As he triumphantly heads back to the gym once more he offers a valedictory wave and a moving addendum: "We may not have much, but we have heart and we have courage."

MH



Half measures: many gym members just work their top halves as they don't want to "waste" protein building up their legs